Covenant-Keeping
The Way to
BLESSEDNESS,
OR,
A brief Discourse wherein is shewn the *Connexion* which there is between the *PROMISE*, on *God*'s Part; and *DUTY*, on *Our* Part, *in the Covenant of Grace*:

As it was Delivered in several Sermons, Preached in Order to Solemn Renewing of

Covenant.

By *SAMUEL WILLARD* Teacher of a Church in *Boston* in *New-England*.

Deut. 7. 9, *Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth Covenant and Mercy with them that Love him, and keep his Commandments, to a thousand Generations:*
10. *And repayeth them that Hate him, to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him, He will repay him to his face.*

BOSTON IN NEW-ENGLAND,
Printed by *James Glen*, for *Samuel Sewall*. 1682.

To the READER.

THE Doctrine of the *Covenant*, however full of grace, and light, and glory, hath occaſioned, as deep Enquiryes, ſo Diſputes, and variety of Apprehenſions, and that too among men both godly and learned, yea, that have been eminently ſo. True it is, that in Principles which do more nearly concern the foundation, or that relate to the ſubſtantials of the Covenant, Orthodox Writers are of the ſame Judgment; and their Circumſtantial differences have cauſed the light of Truth to break forth with a greater brightneſs and glory, *Ex colliſione Ingeniorum ſit ſcintilla Veritatis.* There are very judicious *b* Divines, who in their Diſcourſes of the *Covenant of Grace*, take it in a more ſtrict ſence, for the ſame with that *Covenant of Mercy*, which the Elect-beleeving World is the proper ſubject of. Others (and thoſe who have been great *c*

b Dr. *Facob*, Mr. *Blake*.

c Dr. *Preſton*, Mr. *Rutherford*, Mr. *Gelaſpy*, Mr. *Ball*.

Lights in the Church of God) under the Covenant of Grace, comprehend *the Covenant of Redemption*. Thoſe glorious & bleſſed Tranſactions, which have from the dayes of Eternity, paſſed between the Father and the Son, concerning the Redemption of loſt Sinners, are, (though Decrees & purpoſes) by the Scriptures held forth, and expreſſed unto us, in a Covenant-way. The Lord Chriſt, is the Prince Head, and Mediator of the everlaſting Covenant; He is the great *Patentee*, with whom that *heavenly Charter* is confirmed, and eſtabliſhed for ever. Indeed, the Covenant of Redemption in reſpect of Chriſt is rather of Works, than of Grace, his obedience being every way perfect & meritorious; but as it relates to us, it is a Covenant of Grace; ſince it was from Infinite grace in the bleſſed God, that He hath given his Son to be a Surety for Sinners, and that as to thoſe whom Chriſt hath Undertaken for, Hee accepts of the obedience of another, without requiring Perſonal ſatisfaction according to the Rigor

and

and Holy Severity of the Law.

Various alſo, have the Conceptions, and Expreſſions, of very worthy Men, been, concerning *abſolute*, and *conditional Promiſes*. Some who affirm the Covenant to be [d] abſolute, yet acknowledge that Faith is neceſſary in order to Juſtification, and that ſincere Obedience, and perſeverance therein is neceſſary, *neceſſitate Præcepti, et Medij*, in order to the enjoyment of Salvation; onely, they are not free to uſe the word *Conditions*, leſt they ſhould make thoſe things to be *Cauſæ regnandi*, which are but *Via ad Regnum*. On the other hand, they that aſſert Conditions to be in the Covenant of Grace, do nevertheleſs, own, that there are ſome Promiſes therein [m] which as to the ſubjects of them, are free and Abſolute; *viz.* The Promiſes which reſpect *firſt grace*, the powring down of the Spirit, the giving a new Heart, *&c.* And that the Conditions or Qualifications required of men under the Goſpel in order

d *Mr.* Cotton *Mr.* Bridge, *Mr.* Petto. *&c*

m *See Mr.* Bulkley *of the Covenant.*

order unto Life and Salvation, *viz.* Faith, Repentance, Holineſs, Perſeverance, ſhall moſt infallibly be performed as to the Elect of God, by reaſon of the *Covenant of Redemption*, which is the foundation of that Covenant, which ſome Judicious and Learned, call *the Covenant of Reconciliation*: So that they are far from aſſerting an Uncertainty in the efficacy of the death of Chriſt, or a Conditional Will in God, depending upon, and determined by the Wills of Men; which *Arminian* Heterodoxy hath been elaborately confuted, by ſundry great ° Authors. Thus far then, the Controverſy about abſolute & conditional Promiſes, is not of ſuch moment, but that wee may, *ſalvâ Fide & Charitate*, allow men to expreſs their Notions, and peculiar ſentiments therein: Onely there are, who under pretence of Abſolute Promiſes deſtroy both ſaving Faith, & Obedience. *Antinomians* do no better; and ſome there are, that under that pretence would eſtabliſh an

° Twiſs *de ſcientia media.* Voetius *diſp. de conditionata, ſeu media in Deo ſcientia.*

an Aſſurance of Salvation, before and without thoſe gracious Qualifications which the Scripture declares all men that are deſtitute thereof, to be Chriſtleſs, under the wrath of God, and the Heirs of eternal Death. It will be found that ſuch Doctrine is not the way to comfort true Believers, but to harden preſuming Hypocrites, who are willing to be ſure of Heaven, and yet to retain ſome ſecret ſin; but what good will ſuch a man's aſſurance do him, in the day, *when God ſhall take away his ſoul*?

It is of vaſt Importance and Concernment, for men to be duely inſtructed and eſtabliſhed in the Doctrine of the Covenant: ſince moſt of the Errours of the Times are thereby confuted. Blind *Popiſh* Errors, concerning Merits, Satisfaction, many Mediators, *&c. Arminian* Tenents about Univerſal Redemption, Free Will, Apoſtacy from Grace, *&c. Socinian* Hæreſyes, denying the Deity and Satisfaction of Chriſt. All theſe Errors are inconſiſtent with the Covenant of Redemption, ac-

according as the Doctrine thereof hath (in theſe later Times of Light eſpecially) been held forth from the Scriptures by * ſeveral whom the Lord hath raiſed up, and enabled unto that Service for his Name. *Antinomian* Errors oppoſe the Truth of the Covenant, both as eſtabliſhed with Chriſt (the Second Adam) and with Believers who are his Seed, that by the Goſpel are required to live according to the Holy Rules of the Word of God, and concerning whom the Lord hath promiſed that they ſhall do ſo. *Iſa.* 60. 21. with 53. 10, 11. *Anabaptiſtical* Errors have been very fatal to the Churches of Chriſt ſince the Reformation; in which reſpect a [g] Learned Man giveth wiſe Counſil, when he adviſeth the Miniſters of the Goſpel to be (in a more eſpecial manner) Induſtrious to eſtabliſh their People in Truths that are contrary to ſuch Errors. It is from Miſtakes about the Covenant

* *See Dr.* Jacob, *and Mr.* Flavel's *Sermons concerning the Covenant of Redemption.*

g Amiraldus *de Pace inter Evangel. procurand. P.* 246.

Covenant, that Men are carried away with deluding Opinions, to the unſpeakable Prejudice of their Children as well as of themſelves. For my own part, I do ſolemnly profeſs it, I value that Covenant-Intereſt, which God of his Grace in Chriſt (through the bleſſing of *Abraham* come upon the Gentiles) hath vouchſafed not only to mee, but to my Children, to be ten thouſand Times better, than any earthly Inheritance which this World can affoord: And truly, they have little reaſon to expect that God will bleſs them in their Poſterity, who ſet at nought ſo bleſſed a Priviledge.

Theſe things being ſo, the enſuing Diſcourſe concerning the Covenant of Grace, will (I truſt) be of good Uſe among the Lord's People: Therein the Reverend and worthy Author, hath with Candor delivered his own Judgment in Points that are of a more Controverſial, and Circumſtantial Nature; not being willing to contend about Words, where there

there is an Agreement in the main Principles, on which the Truth ſtands immovable. I know, there are many excellent Treatiſes on this Argument, already extant. Nevertheleſs, what is here preſented is not to be thought ſupervacaneous, ſince the Reader will find that theſe Sermons, as to the Doctrinal part of them, are Succinct, Solid, and Judicious; and that the Applicatory part, is both Powerful, and Seaſonable, being wiſely accomodated unto the preſent State of theſe Churches: more eſpecially unto ſuch as have lately and Explicitly renewed their Covenant with God, and one another. Bleſſed be the Lord, in that He hath ſtirred up the Heart of this His Servant, to give ſuch faithful Exhortations, and Cautions as are here to be ſeen. In ſpecial, I rejoice to ſee what is Expreſſed, *Pag.* 107, 110. Where Profeſſours are called upon to deny themſelves in ſome Lawful Libertyes, rather than to occaſion others to ſin againſt the bleſſed God; And the Neglect of Church-watch and Diſ-

and Diſcipline, is bewayled, as that which doth make Religion to languiſh among us. And it is a delight to ſee that ſerious and ſolemn Caution, *Pag.* 124, 125. to the Children riſing up, that they ſhould beware of overthrowing the Foundations which our Fathers have laid.

Now the Lord own, and go along with his Truth, that thereby many may be awakened, quickened, encouraged in faithful Deſires, and Endeavours to keep Covenant with God. So may they hope that the Lord's Faithfulneſs in keeping Covenant with them, will extend it ſelf to them that fear Him; yea, unto them, and to their Children, and unto their Childrens Children, from generation to generation.

Boſton. N. England;
Novemb. 15, 1682.

INCREASE MATHER.

Covenant-Keeping the way to Bleſſedneſs.

PSAL. 103. 17,18.

17. *But the mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him: and his righteouſneſs unto Childrens Children.*

18. *To ſuch as keep his Covenant, and to thoſe that remember his Commandments to do them.*

IT is an Obſervation worth our ſerious minding, that ever ſince God made Man upon the Earth, he hath dealt with him in the way of a Covenant: he was no ſooner brought into the World, but was tranſacted with in this way: and when he had utterly loſt himſelf by his diſobedience to the firſt, then was a new & Goſpel Covenant opened and revealed unto him, in that firſt glorious promiſe made after mans Apoſtaſie; that the womans Seed ſhould break the Serpents head, *Gen.*3.15. The knowledge therefore and underſtanding of the Covenant, and of our true relation to it, is that which only can help us to the knowledge of our own true eſtate, which is done by compa-

ring our selves with it: Here also we learn our duty by framing our selves according to the condition of it. This last is of special moment to be pondered by a Church or People, designing to renew their Covenant with God, and is the main design of this present Discourse.

This Psalm is a Psalm of Praise, its proper design is to move and perswade the Church of God to celebrate His Glorious goodness and mercy to His People; to which end there is from *vers.* 3. to 20. a particular enumeration of various benefits, for which he is to be acknowledged and honoured in the lips and hearts of His People: One of these is recorded and illustrated from *vers.* 15. to 19. *viz.* His endless mercy, and described,

1. By its duration, from everlasting to everlasting, it is not a fading or soon-expiring Love, but abiding; this is illustrated by the contrary, or compared with the mercy of Man, which must needs be like Himself, and what He is, He tells us, *vers.* 15, 16. *His dayes are as grass*, &c. He is a poor, frail, withering, dying thing, blown down like a bubble, with a little puff, soon gone, and the remembrance of him lost in a little time.

2. By the subject of it, whereof here is a threefold Character, all indeed aiming at one and the same thing, but varying in the expression, and that for our better information: the subjects thereof are described by,

1. The inward principle whereby they are acted, them that fear him which word is used in the Old Testament to be an expression of the obedience of Faith; they that fear God are true Believers, that have received the heart of Children, it intends that reverential and filial fear that is in true Converts, which is the spring and principl of obedience

Jara, *quando ad Deum refertur generale est complectens omnem reverentiam quæ cum veneratione & Religione Deo exhibetur.* Chemn.

2. The

2. The practice of this principle. ſuch as keep His Covenant: *i. e.* thoſe that ſo order their lives, as to obſerve the obligation lying upon them in the Covenant, and endeavour to frame themſelves according to the Terms and Preſcripts of it, and that obſerve the conditions of it.

3. The rule which they follow in their practice, and how they follow this rule; that remember His Commandments to do them: *i. e.* that ſtudy much to acquaint themſelves with the will of God about their duty, or how He expects that they ſhould order themſelves and their wayes; and this with full purpoſe, and conſtant endeavour to practiſe accordingly. Though it be the ſecond of theſe I mainly intend to follow, yet ſo as including or comprehending of the other two, for he that keeps Covenant is one that fears God and keeps His commandments; theſe two comprize all that is required in the Covenant, *Eccl.* 12. 13.

3. By the Intaile of it, *verſ.* 17. where the word Righteouſneſs, is put in inſtead of the word Mercy, to note unto us the ſweet conſent that is between Juſtice and Mercy in this work, and alſo to confirme us in the beliefe of the certainty of the accompliſhment of this promiſe, inaſmuch as God being a God of Righteouſneſs, cannot but do that which is right, he will therefore Perpetuate his mercy according to the tenor and Terms of his Covenant.

Berith *Ab eligendo, quia eliguntur Perſonæ &c.* Buxtorf. *quod fœdus eſt mutuus Conſenſus duorum, ſuper aliqua re,*

Shamar *Connotat*

* The word Covenant, uſed in our text, implies a mutual obligation, and voluntary, between parties, comes from a Root which ſignifies to chuſe, becauſe in a Covenant there is a choiſe of parties and conditions.

* The word *Keeping*, implyes a watchful care: a Noun from the Verb *ſignifies Watch-Tower*, implying that

Curam, Solicitudinem, & Diligentiam, Rivet,

it is no easie matter to keep Covenant, but requires care, diligence, vigilance, observation, and much pains, all which are required in a watchman

The text propounds a great benefit, with a condition: *i. e.* it tell us that there are great and glorious things to be had with God, and shews us the way in which they are to be enjoyed: and lest any should suppose this to be a legal and not evangelical proposition, let the terms of it be exactly minded, and we shall be satisfied: The promise speakes not of things to be merited, purchased, or earned by us, which are legall terms, but it speaks of Mercy: now the dispensation of everlasting Mercy belongs not to the Covenant of Works, but of Grace: the Covenant of Works hath no mention of Mercy: Besides, wherever any mention is made of favour to fallen *Adam*'s Children, it is of Grace: The first Covenant affords no relief to these. It outreacheth the power of fallen Man to keep that Covenant, and in such a way to obtain the Promise.

c *Vide Synops. pur Theol. Disput.* 22. *S.* 13, 14. *&c. Perdus Evangelicum vel vetus est, vel novum* Maccov.

c It is a grand mistake for any to account nothing Gospel, but the New-Testament: Indeed the greatest part of the Old-Testament is Gospel, containing the Gracious Transactions of God with fallen Man: Now wherever such a thing is made mention of, it must needs come under the tenor of the New-Covenant, the first being made weak by the Sin of Man, & no wayes able to help him, *Gal.* 3. 21. *Which could have given Life viz.* to fallen Man. Moreover the scope of this whole *Psalm*, is evangelicall, namely, to represent God to us acting in the application of the mercies of the Covenant of Grace, Pardon, Forgiveness, Pity, tender Care, &c.

Object. But if fearing God, keeping his Covenant, doing

doing his Commandments be here conditions of this Promiſe, then it is legall, for theſe are Works.

A. *Conditions are ſaid to be of two ſorts.*

1. Antecedent, which hold forth the cauſe, whereof the fulfilling of the Promiſe is the effect, and ſuch conditions in a Covenant, are ſaid to merit or earn: ſuch were the conditions of the Covenant made with *Adam*: *Do and live.* He was to have earned his happineſs in a way of doing, and this is legal.

2 Connex and Conſequent, which only holds forth the Connexion of things, or the way and means of conveyance, by and in which God gives the things which are promiſed, but not for which, and yet without which they are not given. See, *Rom.* 8. 13. And of this ſort are the conditions of the Goſpel-Covenant, among which theſe in our text are to be numbred: and this is not legall, but purely evangelicall: they merit not as Works, but only lead as the way to inherit the Promiſe, otherwayes many expreſſions in the Goſpel muſt needs be accounted legall, where doing this and that, bears the reſpect of a Connex-condition. See, *Heb.* 12. 14. *Rev.* 2. 17. *&c. Tit.* 3. 8. Moreover, in the legall conditions, there is required perfection, in theſe God reſpects ſincerity. Hence.

d *Requiruntur equidem in hoc (ſcil. fœdere fidei) opera rerum, non primario, ut ſcil. ex iis homo juſtificetur: ſed conſequenter &c.* Maccov.

Doct. *God hath in the Goſpel promiſed everlaſting mercies to all thoſe that keep his Covenant.*

The matter now to be treated of, being the Covenant, in which Gods profeſſed People ſtand obliged, and principally that part of it which is incumbent on them to look carefully to, that we may the more clearly underſtand

derſtand it? The explication may be taken up in conſidering. 1. Something of the nature of a Covenant in general. 2. What Covenant is here intended, and ſomething of its diſtinct nature. 3. What it is to keep this Covenant. 4. What are thoſe everlaſting mercies that are therein ingaged. 5. The evidence, and grounds or reaſons of the Doctrine: Of theſe in order.

e *Fœdus inter Deum & homines, non eſt* proprie *fœdus; ſed* analogice *Maccov.*

I. Concerning the natnre of a Covenant in general: e there is ſomething Analogicall for Gods tranſactions with his People, being ſuited to the condition of Mankind, hence, whatſoever is eſſential to a Covenant among Men, is here applicable by way of Analogy, and the conſideration of humane dealings, by way of Paction, will ſerve to afford much of light for the clearing up of our underſtandings in the way of our communion with God.

A Covenant, in generall, may then be thus deſcribed: *It it a mutual Engagement between two Parties.* Whatſoever is contained in this deſcription, neceſſarily belongs to every Covenant, and if you take away any one ſyllable of it, it deſtroyes the nature of a Covenant.

In this Deſcription three things are obſervable:

f *Ark of Covenant opened*, pag. 6.

1. f That it is required to every Covenant that there be two parties concerned in it: the notion of a Covenant belongs to the head of Relation, now all Relations are made up of two parties: every Relate muſt have its Correlate: if there be a Father, there muſt be a Child: if there be a lender, there muſt be a borrower: ſo if there be a Covenanter, there muſt be one to be Covenanted withall. It is improper to ſay a man Covenants with himſelf, or if he doth, he muſt put on a double reſpect, or repreſent himſelf under various conſiderations to himſelf. And as there muſt be two parties,

ſo

ſo no more than two parties are in a Covenant, abſolutly neceſſary; nay, properly there can be no more: For although there may be ten thouſand Men engaged in a Covenant (thus all the Subjects in a Kingdom do ſtand in Covenant-relation to their Prince) yet ſtill they conſtitute but one party in that engagment. This doth not deny but that a Covenant may (in caſe of need) admit of an interpoſing Party, whoſe place and buſineſs may be to ſtand as a ſurety, and that either for one Party, or elſe between both, and for each; which latter ſort of ſurety is alſo called a Mediator: *g* yet this is not eſſential unto a Covenant as ſuch, *i. e.* there may be a proper Covenant without it: although (as caſes may be circumſtanced) it is ſometimes very needfull for the better, and more firm eſtabliſhment of a Covenant: But this makes not an encreaſe of the number of Parties, becauſe his ſuretiſhip placeth him with, and puts him into the ſame ſtate and condition in which the party or parties do ſtand, He being involved in the ſame obligation with them.

g Id. Cap 7.

h In fœdere ſe mutuo ſolenniter obligant. Keckerm

2. *h* In every Covenant there is an obligation or engagment and therein it agrees with all Bills, Bonds, mortgages, or whatſoever of the like nature. That a Covenant is an obligation, will appear from the end or intent of the making of it, and that is to give the greater ſecurity to thoſe tranſactions that are between men. It is that there may be afforded the beſt aſſurance that can be for the performance of a promiſe: Now it is the obligation under which a man ſtands that puts him upon it to be the more carefull to ſtand to what he hath promiſed to do, who might poſſibly be otherwayes ſlack and remiſs in performing of it: And hence we read of the bond of the Covenant, *Ezek.* 20. 37. *I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant.* *i. e.* either under the forfeiture of the obligation, or elſe to renew

new their obligation; and so there be some that interpret it, I will afflict you till you solemnly renew Covenant. Yea, it is so essential that sometimes the Covenant receives Denomination from it, *Zech.* 11. 7.

3. In every Covenant there is a mutual obligation; and herein consists the form or distinct nature of it: whereby it is distinguished from a meer bond or obligation, for though in that there be two Parties, and also an engagement, yet this engagement is but on one side, it is not mutual; and the reason of this difference lyes here, because a bare bond, is an acknowledgment of a debt due upon the account of something already received in hand, unto the payment whereof he herein so far gives security: but a Covenant is an agreement about something to be done on the one part, and upon the due performance of it, there is something to be received on the other part, and that the one may have his work done, and the other may not loose his recompence, hence there is mutual security given, and this is properly a Covenant: Thus the Covenant between God and us runs upon such terms, *I will be to you a God, and you shall be to me a People*, Exod. 6, 7.

But for our more full consideration of the mutual engagement of a Covenant, we may observe a few particulars explicatory, *viz.*

1. In every Covenant there is something to be performed, and something to be received upon performance; these two are properly the matter of a Covenant, or the things that go in to its constitution, which two when they are in a Covenant-way ratified, do constitute its form, it ariseth from, or is grounded upon the occasions of dealing or trading between one and another: in like manner we shall find in Scripture, that the Covenant of God is mainly made up of precepts and promises, for the matter of it, I say mainly, for though it be accidentall to a Covenant, yet sometimes, and in some Covenants

venants there is alſo a forfeiture unto which the party who is bound to performance of any thing, doth ſtand obliged, beſides the loſs of the benefit he might have gained, by doing of his duty, and this alſo we find to be in Gods Covenant, and is comprized under the threatnings which are annexed unto it.

2 The ground or reaſon of a Covenant is, that each Party may be ſecured from ſuffering any damage by the other; but may be able to claim and recover the performance, that the one may not fail of having his work done according to his mind, and the other when he hath done it may not be at a loſs for his recompenſe: each Party is concerned to have ſecurity from the Party he indents withall.

3. Hence it is requiſite that the obligation ſhould be mutual, becauſe this is the only way for men to expreſs fair dealing one with another, and ſo to be able to uphold a loving compliance: It is the proof of ſincerity: deceitfull men will give fair words, and make plauſible promiſes; but every honeſt and well meaning man, will be as willing to be bound as to have another bound to him, and therefore will be as ready, to give as to take ſecurity: It is true ſuch proceedings among men ariſe from the falſeneſs which Man is prone to, which God is a ſtranger from, and therefore in himſelf needs not ſo to be engaged: His Promiſe is unfailable, but He indulgeth it to the weakneſs of our Faith.

4. Hence alſo, (the obligation being mutual) there is no Party in a Covenant that is at liberty, or ſtands free, but is under engagement: It is not now at his pleaſure whither he will do or not do, though before it might be: Yea, God Himſelf, though a free Agent, and His Grace is free Grace, who might have choſen whither ever He would have come upon any termes with His Creatures; yet acknowledgeth His Covenant-engagement in which He hath bound Himſelf, and bids us humbly to plead it,

Pſal.

Psal. 74. 20. Neither doth this infringe, but inhaunce the free Grace of God, that He is thus freely bound, who might, without wrong to His Creatures have stood free.

5. By reason of mutual obligation, and that with respect to performance and recompence. Hence in every Covenant there are two things alwayes to be distinctly, and carefully considered, namely the conditions and the consequents.

1. Conditions, wherein there is something required of, and engaged in to be performed by the one Party, this is so essential, that there can be no Covenant without a Condition. They are grosly mistaken who would propound that, as one difference between the Covenant of Works, and that of Grace.

That that had Conditions in it, but this hath none, but is absolute, or a free and full Promise without any Condition. To deny it to have Conditions, is to deny it to be a Covenant. In the Covenant of Grace Beleevers not only have a hope, but it is a grounded hope, and it is grounded in the Covenant. Now that ground of hope which flowes from the Covenant to the Party standing engaged to service, is properly from the condition of it; why else might not every one to whom the Gospel is propounded enjoy this hope? contrary to, 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. *He that hath this hope purifyeth himself as He is pure.* i. e. He Fortifyeth his Hope by his Obedience: and thus every Gospel-command becomes a Covenant-command. There may be an absolute command of meer Lordship, or Soveraignty, but it cannot bear a relation to a Covenant, as a part of it, but it must, besides the nature of a Command, bear also the notion of a Condition: for, where there is a Comand without a Promise, that is an act of meer Lordship, such an one proceeds according to Power, but where there is a Command with a Promise, or threatning adjoyned unto it, this is now cloathed with

the

the reſpect of a Covenant-command, & ſo carrys the nature of a Condition in it with reſpect unto the Promiſe: as when God commands us to believe, & promiſeth that if we ſo do we ſhal be ſaved, or threatens, that upon failure of believing, we ſhal be damned, *Mark.* 16. 16.

2. Conſequents, where there is a Promiſe, or a threatning, or both annexed to the Condition, and engaged in: As the command is laid upon the one Party, or the Condition is undertaken by him, ſo the Promiſe is made and engaged in by the other Party: I do not ſay meerly or abſolutely a Promiſe, but a Promiſe bearing a relation or reſpect to the Condition. Every Covenant-Promiſe is an Hypothetical Promiſe. One may indeed, who is a free Agent, make (if he will) an indefinit Promiſe, or abſolute to another, to do this or that for him, but here is but a ſingle, and not a mutual obligation, and thereupon it beares not any relation unto a Covenant, where the tye is mutual: God was not tyed by any neceſſity of nature to this or that way of dealing; He might therefore, had it ſeem'd good in His eyes, have acted meerly as a Soveraign, and promiſed Life and Salvation, illimitedly to theſe or thoſe according to pleaſure; but becauſe He hath choſen to deal with Man in the way of a Covenant, therefore He doth not ſo do. An abſolute Promiſe cannot be a Covenant-Promiſe, becauſe it contradicts the nature, and takes away that which is eſſential to a Covenant. Hence, neither doth this diſtinguiſh the two Covenants, the firſt and ſecond, that the Promiſes of the one follow the Conditions, the Promiſes of the other are without any conſideration. Every Covenant muſt have the eſſential requiſites of a Covenant in it, the Promiſes of it muſt therefore be conditional, and the fulfilling of them conſequent upon the performance of the *C*ondition: and in the ſame relation with the Promiſes are alſo the threatnings, one referring to the performance, the other to the non-performance

formance of the *Condition*, See, *Isa.* 1 19, 20. *Mark* 16. 16.

Thus of the nature of a *Covenant*, as to the essential of it: but for our more full and clear understanding we may consider that there may be some accidental difference between one *Covenant* and another, according to the different capacity of the Parties: we may therefore observe this one distinction of the *Covenant*, *viz.*

i *Fœdus est* par, *vel* impar *Kecker.*

i Some *Covenants* are made between equals on equal termes, others are made between superiours and inferiours; which occasions a great difference in *Covenants.*

I. Some are made between equals upon equal termes, which parity or equality I understand not, with any reference to their personal capacity, but only as they stand under or related to the *Covenant* transaction: and then are both Parties equal, when in their dealing and obligations they stand upon equal or even ground, which is,

1. When the obligation is not only mutual, but also enterchangeable, *viz.* when each of the Parties stands alike bound, both to conditions and consequents, and this is a complicate Covenant, when the performance of it is requisite from, and the thence arising profite or loss is to fall upon both alike; of this nature or kind we are to account all Leagues offensive and defensive which are made between Kingdoms, or *Colonies*, no wayes depending one upon another, but by acts of friendship: such also are Marriage-*Covenants*; for, although the Parties are in some respect unequal, yet the obligation to duty, and the benefits arising, are interchangeable.

2. When, although the *Condition* lyes upon the one Party, and the consequent upon the other, or one is bound thus to do, and the other to remunerate him so doing; yet still the profit or loss is no wayes more or less redounding to the one then to the other; as when

a *Covenant*

a Covenant is made, that ſuch a perſon ſhal do this or that piece of ſervice, for which (if he perform it) he is to have ſuch a recompenſe; if he performe it not, he is to have nothing: here neither hath any advantage over the other: here all obligations on either ſide are meerly hypothetical, and there is no fault in neglect.

3. When one Party ſtands in no more need of ſuch a Covenant then the other, the one hath as much dependence as the other, and no more, there is no more natural tye or neceſſity here or there, here alſo is ſome ſort of equality.

ℓ Impar, *quo altera pars confœderatorum eſt ſuperior altera inferior.* Idem.

2. ℓ Others are made between ſuperiours and inferiours; where I alſo conſider ſuperiority and inferiority, not barely as it may be in the ſubjects themſelves, their nature, ſtation, &c. but only as they ſtand unequally in the Covenant, and this difference is to be conſidered in two reſpects.

1. Whither the Parties in all other reſpects be equal or no. Yet when the one Party hath a neceſſary dependance upon the other, for ſome benefit which he abſolutly wants, and is to receive from him, which the other hath no need to confer upon him, nor is any wayes advantaged by that which he is to do for him, and he therefore doth it meerly upon the others neceſſity, for which he expects ſome acknowledgment, and accordingly condeſcends to termes of agreement, thus the borrower is a Servant to the lender: Thus a Potent Prince ſometimes undertakes the protection of a diſtreſſed State. Thus alſo God in Chriſt undertakes the defence and ſalvation of a Company of poor undone periſhing Sinners that ſtood in abſolute need of His help, but of whom he had no need, but only to do them a pleaſure, and thus *Hezekiah* pleads the Covenant of God, *Iſai.* 38. 14. *I am oppreſſed, Lord undertake for me,* Thus they, *Jeremi.* 14. 9.

14. 9. *We are called by thy Name, leave us not.*

2. When the one Party hath full and absolute power over the other Party; it is in his hand, and he hath full right and priviledge to do with, and dispose of him according to his own pleasure, and may therefore lay upon him what obligations he sees meet, and bind him to such Conditions as suit best with his own Will; and the other stands under a necessary engagement, either by duty, or at least because his Condition is such as he must needs accept of such terms as are propounded to him, or else he hath no hope nor help in his hand: Here is a full and absolute Superiority, and Inferiority; and it is an Act of Voluntary Condescendency in him to come upon any terms of agreement, who might have been inexorable: Thus it is in the Hand and Power of the Conquerour to give Conditions to the Conquered, and it is a favour to do it when it was in his Power, and it may be he had been many wayes provoked to have destroyed them; and if he give them fair and noble Conditions, his great Candor, and Royal Magnificence is therein expressed. In this Covenant thus circumstanced, the Conditions of it are truly and properly called a Law, because they are propounded with the Authority of the Superiour; and the Inferiour is held under a necessity, either to accept of them, or to suffer. Hence, also the Scripture useth the Word *Covenant* and Law Synonymically, and indifferently; and each Synechdochically; and as the *Condition* is called a *Law*, so the consequent, or the engagement made on the Part of the Superiour is called *Grace*, because it is a free yeelding in him to become bound in any favour, to those that were under his Power, and whom he might as well have made to feel his severity: So that in this state of Superiority, and Inferiority, which is absolute, a Law given, with a Promise, or threatning, or both, annexed to it from one that hath full and free Power to enjoyne it, and signified unto

unto those that do stand under a tye of necessity or duty to accept of it, and do not withstand it, is properly to be reputed a *Covenant*, it being a mutual obligation between two Parties, which ever constitutes a *Covenant*: And this may suffice for the explaining of the general nature of it; the particular consideration of which things, so farr forth as they may be made use of, as applicable to the present designe, *viz.* The nature of the *Covenant* between God and His People, will follow in the sequell

II. We are to consider what Covenant this is which is here intended, and something of its distinct nature: and that the way unto this may be made clear, we must take a brief survey and view of the whole transaction between God and Man, since the time that God created him upon the earth, and the accommodation of each Covenant to the state of Man, whether pure or lapsed.

l *See Dr.* Gouge *Comment. on* Heb. 8. 6, 7, 8.

l Now these Covenants are of two sorts, *viz.* of Works, and of Grace; and are usually called the Old and the New *Covenant*: of each I shall speak something, to shew wherein they agree, and wherein they differ.

1. The Old *Covenant*, or *Covenant* of Works was accommodated to the State of Man in his innocency, and is therefore called of Works, because it was propounded under the notion of Work, and Wages: m though there were abundance of Grace in that, taken in a large sense, for, not only all those habitual principles, with which Man was furnished, as Knowledge, Righteousness and Holiness, impowring him to do his duty, which were Additions to his Nature, and are entituled the Image of God; were Gods free gift: nay, His *Creation* it self was an effect

m *Vi Fœderis, moralia opera Creaturæ respectum habent ad felicitatem.* Alsted. *Theol. pag.* 361.

Gods bounty, who did not owe him a Being: but alſo the reward propoſed was of that Nature and Value, as that the *Pepper-corn* of Man's moſt perfect obedience, (which could no wayes enrich or profit his Lord) could not be thought to hold a valuable proportion to it: Yet, notwithſtanding, there was a Rule of Juſtice alſo attended in this matter (which is no *Egyptian* Task-Maſter, requiring Bricks where no Straw is given) God therefore *made Man upright*, *Eccl.* 7 29. *i. e.* Fitted him for His Rule, with a concreated Power to attend it, and he ſuited a Rule to this capacity, and both told him what was his Work He expected from him; What ſhould be his Wages if faithfully performed; What ſhould be his damage in caſe of non-performance: His Talent was given him, and he was himſelf to improve it, and therefore is it called a Covenant of Works.

2. The Covenant of Grace was every way ſuited to the condition of fallen Man, who having loſt the Stock and Eſtate, the truſt whereof was at the firſt committed to him, and now become utterly Bankrupt, and no wayes able to ſet up again of himſelf, muſt have indulgence ſhown him, and help afforded to him, otherwiſe he is ruined for ever, and it is therefore principally ſaid to be of Grace, becauſe the whole contrivance of it in all things, as it reſpects the objects, namely Man, is abſolutely free. Man was a forfeited Creature into the hands of revenging Juſtice, and God might have left him there for ever, and done him no more but his right, it was then great Grace to ſtoop to make a New Covenant with Him: and the whole frame of it, in all the parts of its Conſtitution is ſo conſidered and ſtated as carries with it a manifeſt demonſtration of the Riches of Grace.

That theſe two Covenants are not only diverſe, but oppoſite, the Scripture ſeems to declare, though this being the oppoſition of *Species*, there are many things in which

which they do agree; and there have been dangerous errors which have aroſe from miſtakes in this point: It may not then be amiſs for prevention here to put in two or three Conſiderations.

1. The Covenant of Works and of Grace agree in the general nature of a Covenant: for this we may ſee the deſcription given under the former Head, for they are both of them equally Covenants: My meaning is, the tranſactions in them are Analogicall, or accomodated to our conceptions of a Covenant, in both alike.

2. The Covenant of Works is not deſtroyed, but accompliſhed by the Covenant of Grace. The Covenant of Works was in ſome ſenſe an everlaſting Covenant, for it was not to be taken away by diſanulling, but by accompliſhment: This he who knew his own Work profeſſeth, *Mat.* 5. 17. *I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfill, viz.* The Law, *i. e.* the firſt Covenant for He came to merit Heaven for us in a way of Doing; and in this ſenſe one Covenant is not againſt another: See, *Gal.* 3. 21. *Is the Law then againſt the Promiſe of God? God forbid:* The Covenant of Works ſtands of ſuch force, and bears ſuch a Relation to all Mankind, that it muſt be fulfilled to a tittle, and ſo ſatisfied, or elſe no Man can not be ſaved. The Covenant of Grace wageth no War with that of Works, but its buſineſs is to find out and propound a Way, whereby it may be fully performed according to all the challenges of it, and ſo as thereby clear diſcovery may be made of Grace unto Man, for whom it is fulfilled.

3. Yea, Man's Salvation is ſo contrived in the Covenant of Grace, that the Juſtice of the firſt, and the Mercy of the ſecond, the Righteouſneſs of the firſt, and the Peace of the ſecond, do entertain each the other with mutuall embraces of perfect amity, *Pſal.* 85. 10, 11. And herein indeed are manifeſted the unſearchable depths of infinite Wiſdome, that the Covenant of

Works is not laid by as an uſeleſs thing, but is acknowledged in all its claimes and challenges; yea, and Gloriouſly, Triumphantly Exalted, and yet the People of God removed out of harms way, and no whit endangered by it, as being not perſonally under the Law, but under Grace, *Rom.* 6. 14. But I proceed.

That *C*ovenant which is now under conſideration, is the ſecond, or New-*C*ovenant, or *C*ovenant of Grace, in which only it is that the everlaſting Mercy of God breaks forth and appears to the *C*hildren of Men, now fallen from the obedience of the firſt.

This is by ſome called *One* Covenant, becauſe it indeed contains in it but one deſigne, *viz.* The exaltation of the Glory of mercy (tempered with Juſtice) towards a company of undone Men: The procuring and accompliſhing of which, in this way, is that one buſineſs which is directly aimed at in it. But yet if we look upon it narrowly, and view it from the beginning to the end, we ſhall find that there are contained in it two diſtinct Covenants, and both of them Covenants of Grace. Now the reaſon why we are to look upon the buſineſs of Man's Salvation to be performed in two Covenants, will plainly appear, if we conſider the three particulars laſt mentioned: from whence we may gather that there are two Works to be done, in the bringing of fallen Man to Glory, *viz.*

1. The firſt Covenant is to be compounded with all and ſatisfied, the demands of the Law muſt be anſwered, and that muſt be according to the rigour of Juſtice; every Condition of it muſt therefore be fulfilled to a tittle. & ωτα *Mat.* 5. 18. There is nevera ſyllable of mercifull condeſcendency in that Covenant; nor, though fallen Man be a Bankrupt and broken Merchant, will it ever come to any loſing compoſition with him; whither he have or have not to pay, it will have all its due in weight and meaſure.

2. The

2. The Condition of the New-Covenant must be performed, for, in, and by those that are brought under it. For, though there are other Conditions, and such as are suited to the state of fallen Man, and the manifestation of the Grace of God to him, yet they are as positive unalterable Conditions as those of the first, [n] and do as certainly exclude from happiness and sentence unto misery, those that fall short of them, as did the first, *Mark*, 16. 16. Now these are two distinct things, and unto them are adapted two distinct Covenants, though both are full of Grace to fallen Man, which will be further cleared when we consider the difference between them. And indeed the want of this consideration is that which puzzles many a soul, and makes them confused in diverse conceptions which they have concerning the Covenant: for (as learned [o] *Doctor Owen* well observes) to the understanding, conceptions, and notions that Men have of the Covenant of God, and as this Doctrine is stated in their minds, so are their conceptions of all other sacred Truths conformed.

n *See* Pareus *on* Gen. 18. 19.

o *Preface to* Covenant of Redemption opened.

p Of these Covenants the first is by divines called the Covenant of Redemption, and the other the Covenant of Reconciliation: For although God be reconciled in the first, or satisfaction is given Him, which he takes up with on the account of all His chosen, yet the actual transaction between God and Man, or mutual Reconciliation is accomplished in the second. In the first is the Price of Man's Ransome pay'd, and he by Price redeemed, therefore stiled of Redemption. In the second, the application of it is made, and the heart of Sinners is reconciled unto God: Hence termed of Reconciliation. When the Scripture speaks of the Covenant of Grace, it some-

p *Ark of the Covenant, P.* 1.

times intends the one, and ſometimes the other of theſe, and though theſe two agree in many things, yet the difference between them is ſuch, as will well amount to ſuch and ſo great a diverſity, as to denominate them two really diſtinct Covenants. q They both indeed ariſe from free Grace, as their Originall giving Being to them, and they do each deſigne the Glory of this Grace as their ultimate end, and the Salvation of Man as the way by which, or Man with reſpect to his Salvation, as the ſubject in which that Grace is to be glorified; and they equal extend only to the Elect, and all of theſe as the ſubjects of Application of that Grace in which they are terminated; and do laſtly center only in Chriſt as the undertaker, and great Efficient that is uſed in the accompliſhment of them; for in both of theſe Covenants Chriſt ſtands in our Room and Place, and is reſponſible for us, in the one as a Sacrifice, in the other as a Surety: But yet there are diverſe remarkable differences in them: For,

q *Idem.* Pag. 114. &c.

1. r They have different Parties: In the one God and Chriſt are the two Parties, *i. e.* Chriſt Perſonall, or the Perſon of Jeſus Chriſt God Man; but in the other God the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt make the one Party, and Chriſt Myſticall, *i. e.* Chriſt and His Church conſidered as One, do make the other: And that I here put Chriſt into both Parties is not to be wondered at, becauſe He is Mediator, and Surety on both ſides: Chriſt is looked upon in the firſt as a Peculiar Perſon Covenanting, in the other as a common Perſon in the Name of His Elect. Hence, in the firſt of theſe the People of God are not to be looked upon as Parties indenting, but as a Subject indented for; they do not Covenant to redeem themſelves, but are the Matter of Chriſt's Redemption, and hence they are contained, not in the Condition, but in the

r *Idem.* P. 118. &c.

the Promiſe of that Covenant, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *If he ſhall make His Soul an offering for Sin,* There is the Condition, *His Soul ſhall ſee His ſeed*: There is the Promiſe; here therefore they ly in the Promiſe, and there Salvation is the wages of Chriſt's Obedience: but in the ſecond they are indenting in Chriſt, and ſtand with Him under a Covenant-Condition: *Text*; and this will ſhew us a ſatisfactory reaſon, why many Promiſes come abſolutely to us, which are yet conditionall Promiſes in the Covenant they belong to: *ex. gr.* The Promiſe of Converting, Healing, Leading, comes abſolutely to the Elect, for they are converted without any previous Condition in them; nor can we juſtly ſuppoſe any previous Preparatory diſpoſitions or qualifications, as Conditions aſcertaining converſion: Hence that, 2 *Tim.* 2 13. *If we believe not, He abideth true, He cannot deny Himſelf. i. e.* His Promiſe made to Chriſt: But ſtill if we referr this Promiſe to the right Covenant, it is conditionall, and belongs to the Covenant of Redemption; where, for the obtaining of this benefit, Chriſt ſtood engaged to buy him out of the hand of the Law, and purchaſe and make payment for him of an inheritance among the Saints; and if Chriſt had not fulfilled the condition of that Covenant, no Elect Perſon had ever been converted: It was Chriſt that agreed for; yea, bought and pay'd for them firſt: Hence it is, that although the Goſpell be propounded ſo in the Covenant of Reconciliation, as to Promiſe Life upon condition of Believing, yet God in faithfulneſs doth give to His Elect this Grace of Faith, makes them Beleevers againſt their naturall Wills, taking away Obſtinacy and Infidelity, and ſo brings them under the Condition by meer Grace, becauſe there is a more ancient Covenant of Grace than the Goſpell-Covenant, in which He ſtands fully and freely obliged thus to do.

2. The one of them is between equals, the other is between Superiours and Inferiours: When I ſay the firſt

was between equals, my meaning is, that both the Parties were equal, and the terms also equal. There was an equality between the Parties, it was a compact made between God the Father and His Fellow, so Christ is called, *Zech.* 13. 7. He counted it no Arrogancy or Injury to be His Compeer *Phil.* 2. 6. An equality also in the terms, it was a free Covenant on God's Part, He was not at all obliged to it, but did it according to His good pleasure, *Col.* 1. 19. It was Voluntary also on Christ's Part, He did it spontaneously, *Phil.* 2. 7. Whereas the other is between Parties greatly disproportionable. As in the Covenant of Redemption, the Parties were equal, and the Conditions equal; what Christ pay'd down was worth that which he received, His Blood was Precious, and well worth the Lives of all that were Redeemed by Him so here in the other the Partyes are in themselves greatly distant; there is the great God on the one side, and Man who is but a Worm on the other, a Holy God, and Sinfull Man, a Soveraign God, and Man a forfeited creature, lost, undone, miserable: the condition also and consequents of this Covenant hold no proportion of vertue between them, a little Faith and an exceeding weight of Glory. Again, the one Party He is free and no wayes necessitated, might have glorified Himself in their ruine, and He is Soveraign, they are condemned Captives, He may lay what He will upon them, and they are bound to accept it, and if they do refuse it, that refusall shall encrease their guilt.

3. Though the Covenant of Redemption was a Covenant of Grace, respecting the designe and subject it aimed at, and that both on God's Part, and on Christ's Part, both of them conspiring, and proposing the recovery of fallen Man, from a state of misery without any merit of his own; yet in the true nature of it, as it was made between the Parties Covenanting, it was a rigid and strict Covenant of Works; If we consider what the Redeemer

was

was to do for the procuring of Salvation for His People: Jeſus Chriſt, ſtanding in our room and ſtead, undertook and engaged to perform every tittle of the firſt Covenant: He did not aſſume a Lordſhip over it to abrogate it, but became a ſubject of it to fulfill it, *Mat.* 5. 17. and upon this account, or on theſe conditions He was to receive His reward: the conditions that were laid upon Him were Works: It was by Obedience that He was to Redeem us, *Rom.* 5 19. *By the Obedience of One, viz.* Chriſt. Hence all the Sins of the Elect were laid upon Him, and He was fain to bear them, elſe He had not born them away from us, *Iſa.* 53. 3, 8, 11. But the Covenant of Reconciliation is grounded upon termes and conditions, which are in their own nature gracious: Hence, the Apoſtle tells us, *It is of Faith that it might be of Grace, Rom.* 4. 16. In the one of theſe there is a perfect Righteouſneſs to be compleatly performed, but in the other there is a Righteouſneſs already wrought to be accepted and laboured in.

4. In the Covenant of Redemption there was no Mediator: there were only the Parties indenting. There was indeed no need of a Mediator, for there was no difference between God and Chriſt to be taken up, for they were perfectly ſatisfied one in another; neither was there any ground of diſtruſt between God and Chriſt, for they could readily take each others Word and Promiſe: nor had they any reaſon or occaſion to ſuſpect one another. Indeed there could not poſſibly be a Mediator in that tranſaction, for there was none that was capable to be an interpoſing Party between God the Father and Son. But in the Covenant of Reconciliation there is a Mediator, Jeſus Chriſt, who ſtands between both, that He may bring God and Man into Covenant together, and maintain the bond of it, occuping the room of a Surety, undertaking, and giving ſecurity that there ſhall be fair and faithfull dealing on both hands.

Hence

Hence we have that assertion, *Heb.* 12. 24. *Jesus the Mediator of the New-Covenant*, which belongs to the Covenant of Reconciliation: Fallen Man is jealous of God, because he knows Him not, and conscious of his own ill-deserving: God is justly jealous of Man, who is become a lyer, a faithless creature, and not to be trusted, alwayes ready to falsify his Oath, and break his Covenant. Hence in such a Covenant wherein Man is to be dealt withall as one Party in it, there was necessity of a Mediator, else there could have been no safe and secure transaction with him. Other difference might have been propounded, but these may suffice to shew that there is a real and essential difference between those two Covenants.

Touching the nature, properties, and excellency of the Covenant of Redemption, though it be of great worth and use to contemplate, yet it belongs not to our present discourse: The matter we are upon referrs to the *Covenant* of Reconciliation, in which Man stands as a Party actually engaged to the performance of those terms and conditions which are required of him therein; and it is only in the way of his attendance thereunto, according to the scope and tenor of them that he can expect to enjoy the consequent blessing there promised.

Of the *Covenant* of Reconciliation we may take this Description.

It is that mutual engagement, in which God the Father, Son and Spirit on the one side, and His Church or People on the other side, stand engaged, in Conditions, and consequent Promises. I mean, that the *Church* is engaged to *Conditions*, and God to consequent Promises.

This *Covenant* presupposeth the *Covenant* of Redemption to have gone before, and have made way for it; and every true Beleever hath his eye alwayes upon it: For till such time as *Care* was taken that the just claims and demands

demands of the Law might be ſatisfied, and all the allegations which it could bring in againſt the Sinner cleared & removed, reconciliation and atonement was not to be hoped for: But now *Chriſt* having done that effectually, by fulfilling all Righteouſneſs, and ſuffering the full weight of puniſhment due for his Peoples tranſgreſſions. Now there is a fair Way, and an open Door for a treaty of Peace between God and Man, on ſuch gracious terms os God ſhall condeſcend to propoſe unto him.

The ground and reaſon of this *Covenant* is, becauſe God will deal with Man in a way agreeable to his nature, whom (being a reaſonable creature, and a cauſe by counſell of his own actions) he treats by making proffers to him, propounding fair and rationall Conditions, and adding gracious encouragements, and for the full, cleer, and unfailing performance of all, Jeſus *Chriſt* ſtands ready as an undertaker for the carrying on, and full accompliſhment of the whole buſineſs, on which account, and in reſpect of which *Covenant*, He is ſaid to be the *Mediator between God and Man*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 4.

Now this Covenant of Reconciliation is that which we uſually call the *Goſpel-Covenant*, becauſe it brings in it the glad tydings of Peace, or carryes in it the diſcovery of a way wherein fallen Man may be reſtored to the favour of God, and the enjoyment of His everlaſting Love, which otherwiſe had been a thing hopeleſs.

Now this Covenant (that we may at length come to the particular buſineſs here intended) admits of a double conſideration, or is to be looked upon according to a different way of Adminiſtration, *viz.*

1. It may be looked upon according the inward and ſpiritual application of it to the Elect, as it is made uſe of to the bringing of them into the inviſible Church, and placing them among the number of God,s effectually called Ones, which is performed by the efficacious ope-

ration

ration of the Spirit of God, drawing of Souls home to Jesus Christ by the means of Grace, making them powerfull to the end, and so putting these into a state of Grace by Believing, which is the prime designe of the Gospel: And according to this dispensation of it, it extends only to the Elect, and is indeed nothing else but the application of the Covenant of Redemption, to the proper Subject respected in it, be the means of the Covenant of Reconciliation: and in this sence the Word Church is often used in the New-Testament intending only the converted Elect.

§ *Ark of Covenant, P.* 394.

2. § It may be considered according to the visible and externall dispensation of it, in the way of the Gospel, as it is exhibited in the Ordinances, and given out as an Edict from God unto those to whom the Gospel is sent, and there carries in and with it the proposition of Life and Salvation, and the threatning of Death and Damnation, and these according to the tenor of termes and conditions which are therein made known: and thus extends, or bears a relation, not only to such as are true Beleevers, but others also, *viz.* Unto all those that are in the Visible Church, with there seed, professing Obedience to Gospel-Order and Ordinances. To this Covenant, or this manner of dispensation of it, true Beleevers have truely and properly a relation, so far as they are visible, and stand under visible Ordinances.

Under this last Consideration we are to look upon the Covenant to be presented in our text, *viz.* The Covenant of Reconciliation according to the visible and externall dispensation of it among such a People as are in visible Covenant with God: and this differs from the same Covenant according to the internall dispensation of it, in these thing.

1. In the One, the Covenant is firmly established, and unalterably, God is become the God & portion of the Soul

Soul that hopes and believes in him, and Beleevers are made His People really, the ſoul is made to believe, the Covenant is firmly ſettled, and unmoveably: whereas in the other it is only propounded with the command and threatning on God's Part, and on the other hand as only outwardly & profeſſedly aſſerted & ſubmitted to by thoſe concerned, and that oftentimes deceitfully, *Pſal.* 73. 35, 36, 37. not but that many in the viſible *C*ovenant have more than outwardly aſſented to it. True Beleevers give not only their hands, but their hearts alſo to God, but that referes to the internall and not the viſible diſpenſation of the Covenant.

2. In the One the Covenant is ratified and confirmed by a ſurety and undertaker for the performance of it, by all thoſe that are related to it: The Soul having cloſed with Chriſt by Faith, he becomes a never failing ſurety for him, that he ſhall do his Part of it, and to him that all the Promiſes of it ſhall be fulfilled upon him: In the other it is not ſo, there is alſo Chriſt propounded as a ſurety, and His readineſs to undertake for us, if we will by Faith cloſe with and accept of Him to that end: He tenders Himſelf to be a *C*orner-ſtone, but withall threatens to be a ſtumbling-ſtone, and Rock of offence if He be not believed in but deſpiſed. In the one *C*hriſt is an undertaking Mediator, in the other only a proffered Mediator. In both we are aſſured that there is no treating with God, but by a middle perſon: the one tells a Beleever, that Chriſt ſtands in his room reſponſible for him; the other tells all that are the ſubjects of it, they may have Him for ſuch if they will, *Rom.* 10. 9.

3. In the one the good and happy eſtate of the Soul is made ſure, and ſtands firmly built upon a foundation which is immoveable; he that once truly believes in Chriſt is as ſecure of his bleſſedneſs, as thoſe that are now in full poſſeſſion of it, *Rom.* 11. 29. But in the other, Man ſtands only upon conditions, according to his perfor-

perſorming, or non-performing of which he muſt expect to ſtand or fall. My meaning is, the condition is in one perſormed, or ſo engaged in, that the Promiſe is ratified; in the other it may yet ſtand unperformed, and ſo the ſubject of it is yet upon a hazardous bottom, and may be loſt and periſh for all his relation to it, *Rom.* 3. 13.

4. In the one the Beleever is fully diſcharged from any challenge of the Covenant of Works, the Law hath not any more claim to hold him under, *Rom.* 6. 14. *Ye are not under the Law, i, e.* As a Covenant, elſe Beleevers are under the Law as a Rule. In the other, a Man may be ſtill held captive of the Law, and ly open to condemnation, only a deliverance is promiſed to him on conditions, *Job.* 3. 13. For it is certain none can deliver us from the Law, but Chriſt, and He delivers none but thoſe that fly to Him, and place their truſt in Him: if Men be not found in Chriſt, more then by a viſible claim, the Law will ſeize upon them.

5. In the one a Beleever is brought under the Promiſes, and eſcaped from the danger of the threatnings: Life is aſſured him, and Death is removed from him, it ſaith he ſhall not dye but live, *Rom.* 8. 3. *In Chriſt, i. e.* by a living Faith: in the other a Perſon is lyable to both. *verſ.* 13. Where the Apoſtle directs his ſpeech to them under the notion and conſideration of viſible Beleevers, and ſo they have a reſpect to threatnings as well as promiſes: and the reaſon is, becauſe in the one the condition is looked upon as fulfilled (being ſo in part, and the whole undertaken for by Chriſt) Hence he is eſcaped the forfeiture: whereas in the other it is conſidered as a Covenant depending, and to iſſue according to the carriage of the ſubject.

Now theſe are not eſſential differences, ſuch as ſhould make it two Covenants, but all only ſuch as ariſe from the Modall diſpenſation of it: The reaſon of which different

ferent diſpenſation is, becauſe God will gather up His Elect out of the rubbiſh of the World, in ſuch a way, as ſhall tend to leave others alſo inexcuſable if they will not come in. Indeed the main reaſon of this viſible diſpenſation is for the Elects ſake, that they may be gathered in a way ſuting the nature of a reaſonable creature. There are many brought into the viſible Covenant that ſome may be ſaved of theſe many. God had rather a thouſand ſhould have the Goſpel unprofitably, than one choſen Veſſell want it. But God doth it alſo that ſuch as neglect the improving of it unto Salvation, may periſh with the greater condemnation, and more triumphant Exaltation of revenging Juſtice: Hence, not only the Couenant of Works, but the Covenant of Grace too, will have to lay to the charge of all ſuch as for abuſing of it, *Joh.* 3, 19.

3. *What it is to keep Covenant?*

Anſ. Keeping of Covenant is to be interpreted or underſtood according to the Relation and Station of the Party under conſideration: reſpect is alſo to be had to the quallity of the Covenant. Now in a Covenant wherein there is an imparity in the Parties (t and ſuch is the Covenant of Reconciliation) it is a thing very uſefull to be obſerved, that on the Part of the Inferiour there is ſomething to be done which is expected as a duty from him, unto which he ſtands obliged whither there were any conditions propounded or no; and that, either by vertue of a command given, which was a prerogative of his Superiour over him, if he had ſuch an abſolute power, or by voluntary, and illimited Promiſe made thus to do, or both. Whereas the Superiour ſtands equally poized in the Covenant, as one that hath no other tye or obligation lying upon him, but what is conditionall.

t *Fœderis Dei cum homine ratio, non eſt inter eos qui* Paris *ſunt juris; ſed inter* Dominum & Servum. *Alſted.* Theol. *P.* 360.

tionall. Hence followes this difference in the nature of keeping Covenant, *viz.* The Superiour may keep his Covenant either wayes, namely, either by fulfilling the Covenant-Promiſe, or by executing the Covenant threatning, alwayes provided that it truly correſpond, or bear a due reſpect to to the deportment or behaviour of the Inferiour in the things which he thus ſtands related to: Hence it is, that God keeps His Covenan as well by inflicting puniſhment upon the diſobedient, as by performing mercyes for the obedient; although the Scripture uſually refers to that Letter. But now it is far otherwiſe on the part of the Inferiour, for Obedience is the thing which is expected from him, and therefore is engaged by a Promiſe annexed to it; but diſobedience is a wrong done to his Superiour, and is therefore Hedged with a ſevere threatning, and the guilt of it brings damage upon him: Hence it is that by obedience he is reputed to keep Covenant, becauſe then only doth he perform his Covenant-duty. Diſobedience is a breach of Covenant, becauſe he violates by it the Covenant-duty.

Now our preſent diſcourſe relates to the Inferior or his keeping Covenant, of which take this deſcription: It is his performance of the Covenant-condition of Obedience: where, by the Word *Obedience*, I do not underſtand a member of Religion contradiſtinct from Faith, or (or as the Word is often uſed to expreſs) the ſecond Part of Divinity, but only a correſpondent or ſutable demeanure to that Part of the Covenant which comes from the Superiour under the notion of a Law or Command, or ſomething that is required and expected to be performed in the Covenant: which, what it is, is yet under enquiry: and we are now to diſcuſs, *viz.*

Queſt. *What is the Condition required in the Covenant of Reconciliation, conſidered as held forth in the viſible and externall diſpenſations of the Goſpell? and when this is well under-*

underſtood, we may eaſily conclude what it is to keep Covenant.

Anſ. But the anſwer of this queſtion is not without its difficulty, partly becauſe the way lyes very narrow between Antinomian and Arminian errours, and therefore there needs the greater exactneſs in cutting the threed true, partly becauſe I find Judicious and Orthodox Divines to vary in their expreſſions of it. But I ſuppoſe if we more narrowly obſerve them, we ſhall find that theſe differences will appear to be rather in words and termes, then in ſubſtance: for our better reconciling of theſe let us take notice.

1. That Faith and Obedience are the Parts of that Religion which is given to fallen Man as the Rule of his Life, is acknowledged by all Orthodox, and maintained as a grand Piller againſt Antinomianiſme, who (miſuſing the phraſe, *Only believe*) would exterminate New-Obedience from this Rule; whereas many places in the New-Teſtament do clearly ſtand for its confirmation: among many, *See*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. Where *Love* intends, and is but another expreſſion of Obedience, *Tit.* 3. 8. *Good Works*, are Works conformed to the Rule of Obedience: when God bids Men to believe, He doth not forbid them to obey, nor diſcharge them from Obedience, but doth together enjoyn them to it.

2. That both of theſe bear a relation to the *Covenant* of Reconciliation, or are in the Goſpell-*Covenant* as it is exhibited to Men in the outward diſpenſation of it, is alſo a Truth not doubted of by thoſe that love the Truth. And the reaſon for it is plain, becauſe (as we before heard) God ſtill tranſacts with Man in way of a Covenant; as alſo becauſe there are Evangelicall Promiſes made to the one and the other, and threatnings denounced againſt the neglect of the one as well as the other, which things declare that Obedience alſo hath its relation to that *Covenant*.

3. That

3. That Faith is a new Covenant condition, is not a matter that needs disputе (alwayes denying it to be a meritorious Condition, or any wayes to infringe the freeneſs of Grace, but rather to enhaunce it) the Goſpel is ſo full for it, and ſo clear in ſetting it in oppoſition to the Works of the Law, *i. e.* the condition of the firſt Covenant, and giving it the ſame place in the New Covenant, *viz.* Of a Condition; the Promiſe alſo which is conditionally annexed unto it, and that inſeparably, makes it beyond ground of queſtion, ſee *Mark* 16. 16. *Joh.* 3. 16. 36. *Joh.* 5. 12.

4. Hence the only enquiry here to be made, is, in what quality or conſideration Goſpel-Obedience ſtands related to the Goſpel-Covenant? There are ſome (yea, many) that determine that Faith is the only Goſpel-condition, and Obedience is a Goſpel-command, and the ground of this concluſion ſeemes to be, partly becauſe by believing we are brought into a State of Grace, & aſſured of Salvation, and Obedience follows afterwards: partly becauſe if Obedience be admitted as a New-Covenant-condition, we ſhall neceſſarily be reduced to a Covenant of Works. Others there be that look upon Obedience to be not only a part of, but a condition in the New-Covenant, and that unto which the conditionall Promiſe ſtands related as well as unto Faith, and that there is no danger by ſo ſaying and believing, of returning to the Old and Antiquated Covenant of Works. I perſwade my ſelf that there is here no real difference or contrary mind in the ſubſtance of what is believed, but that one thing is really intended, which may be reconciled in theſe propoſitions.

1. We are here to carry in mind the fore-mentioned deſtinction, *viz.* that the conditions propounded in the Goſpell are not Antecedent and Meritorious, or ſo propounded as to be the procuring cauſe of God's Love and Favour, or of the reward propounded in the Covenant, ſuch

ſuch as were the conditions of the Covenant of Works and theſe propounded to Chriſt in the Covenant of Redemption: for whatſoever reſpected to price and purchaſe, we muſt referr it to Chriſt alone: But they are connex and conſequent, only pointing out unto us the way in which the free bleſſing of Grace is to be obtained by Mankind. Hence, we are utterly to diſclaim and oppugne all ſuch Popiſh Doctrines, as any wayes tend to render good Works to be meritorious of the promiſed good. This is certain, that the different way of proponnding one and the ſame thing, may greatly alter the quality and conſideration of it: If Salvation ſhould be of Works as the Cauſe, it would ſhut out Grace; but that good Works may be of the things that accompany Salvation, and that neceſſarily as concomitants, is very well conſiſtent with the free Grace of God appearing in our Salvation.

2. That which makes a Command in a Covenant become a Condition, is when it is tyed (eſpecially when it is both Negatively and Affirmatively tyed) to a conditionall Promiſe, It is true, that a command poſitively given in way of meer ſoveraignty is no condition, but when there is a command given, and he that gives it, ſo obligeth himſelf with it to him to whom it is given, as to engage that if he truly and faithfully perform it, he ſhall be thus and ſo benefited by it; and alſo to threaten, that if he fall ſhort, he ſhall thus ſuffer: the command is now ſo qualified as properly to bear the notion of a condition, becauſe the Promiſe and threatning are poſitively related to it, and muſt accordingly take place.

3. God having pleaſed to deal with Man, in the Goſpell, in a way of Grace. Hence, though He do command him as a Soveraign, yet he mixeth Grace in all His Commands, ſo that there is no command which is enjoyned us in the Goſpell which brings not its benefit

along with it. Or there is no command in the Gospell which comes to us under the Title of meer Soveraignty, but also carryes with it the sweetness of a Promise, as well as the rigour of a threatning. We may observe that the quality of a condition is not only put upon Faith, as, *Mark*, 16. 16. but upon Obedience too, *Heb.* 12. 14. *Rom.* 8. 13. That command in the Gospell which if a Man do perform, he hath assurance of Life in his performance, but if he do not perform, he is certified of Death and Damnation by the neglect of it, and all this according to the proposition of the Gospell-Covenant, that must carry the respect of a condition; but such is Gospel-Obedience, as the Scriptures forecited, and many more do evidence, or we may take it thus: All that which God propounds in the Gospel as needfull to be performed by us; yea, so needfull, as eternall Life, and Death are infallibly consequent thereupon; yea, and are referrible thereto, is of the condition of the Gospel-Covenant, and that is Faith and Obedience: separate Obedience, and you have a Faith which is vain, *Jam.* 2. 14. and which may be found in Devils, *vers.* 19.

4. Whereas Faith is sometimes asserted to be the only Condition required of us in the New-Covenant, it is thus to be understood, *viz.* Either,

1. That Faith is the only Condition of our Justification, but not so of our Salvation. It is a Condition of our Salvation too, but not only: the Right and Title to Salvation is conferred in Believing, but there is Obedience also requisite in the way to Salvation, *Tit.* 3. 8.

2. That Faith is the only Condition by which we come to have an interest in Christ's suretiship, but not of what is in this suretiship engaged by Christ for us that we shall do. By believing in him, Christ comes to be our acknowledged and actual Surety in the Covenant of Reconciliation, who was our designed and indented Surety in the Covenant of Redemption; but still there is some-

ſomething he ſtands Surety for us in, which is formally to be done by us, though vertually by the influence and efficacy of His Grace: God expects, and Chriſt promiſeth that we ſhould fear Him, and obey Him, and for this He ſtands bound in the behalf of every Beleever; yet the viſible Covenant being propoſed to us, as well as to Him: Hence, we alſo ſtand obliged to the performance of it: God in it tells us what it is that He expects of us if we hope to enjoy Him, which (though it muſt be wrought efficiently by His Spirit, yet it) muſt be formally performed by us, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12.

3. Faith may be ſaid to be the only Condition as it is a comprehenſive Grace: Both

1 As it is that whereby we lay hold upon Chriſt, and cloſe with the Promiſe in Him, and ſo come to be actually ſubjects of it according to the tenor of it in the Covenant.

2. As it is the Spring and Life of New-Obedience, *i.e.* ſuch a Faith whoſe Nature is to work by Love; and hence we find that the whole Spiritual Life of a Chriſtian is called the Life of Faith, *Heb.* 10. 38. *Gal.* 2. 20. It is not an idle, or dead, but a lively and working Faith: for indeed it is the Faith that mixeth with the duty of a Chriſtian that only puts a worth upon it in Gods account, the want of which ingredient renders the moſt ſpecious duties of Men of no value, *Heb.* 11. 6.

Queſt. *But it may then be enquired whither Obedience be not rather a Promiſe made to Faith, than a Condition required of us in the New-Covenant? Since Chriſt hath Promiſed in the Goſpell, that he that believes ſhall be ſaved, and if ſo, then (by neceſſary conſequence) he that Promiſeth the end, Promiſeth alſo the means, i. e. All that which is requiſite to bring us to Salvation, and there Obedience may properly take its place.*

Anſ. In ſatisfaction to this inquiry theſe things are well to be weighed.

1. We muſt diſtinguiſh between a Promiſe made by God as one Party in the Covenant, and one made by Chriſt, ſtanding in the place of a Mediator interpoſing between both Parties: † Jeſus Chriſt ſtands as a Mediating, Surety on both ſides: He makes Promiſes to His Father, that all that He requires of us ſhall be done: And He makes Promiſes likewiſe unto us, that all our Works ſhall be wrought in us and for us: He is a Surety for both Conditions, and conſequents of the Covenant; now the Surety repreſents the Perſon for whom He is ſuch, and therefore the Perſon is in Him engaged; for in that reſpect He ſtands on that Party, there being but two in a Covenant: If then a Surety Promiſe for us that we ſhall do thus or ſo, and that withall Promiſe to us that He will do the ſame thing in and for us if we will rely on Him for it; this doth not change the Nature of it from being a debt on our Parts; for though Chriſt hath promiſed us that He will do it in us, yet God ſtill look sthat it ſhall be done by us.

Mr. Stone's *Catechiſ. Manuſcript.*

2. We are to diſtinguiſh between that which we ſtand poſitively engaged to, and that which God affords us to be our encouragement in ſtanding to our engagement: We ſtand engaged actually to ſerve God, to obey all His Commands: But of our ſelves we cannot do it, *Joſh.* 24. 19. Now to relieve our impotency, and animate our Obedience, Chriſt engageth to us, that if we will believe in Him, we ſhall ſerve God, *viz.* That He will put His fear in our hearts, that we ſhall not depart away from Him; He will give Grace. This is the excellency of the Covenant of Grace, that it requires nothing of us, but withall diſcovers to, and ſets before us what, and where our help is for the performance of it, which Grace is then highly abuſed when we think our ſelves thereby acquitted from our duties; *Paul* was of another mind, and therefore frames an argument to excite

excite us to greater diligence, from this very conſideration, *Phil.* 2. 12, 13.

3. It is to be obſerved that Chriſt's ſuretiſhip engageth Him to two ſorts of Works: There are ſome which He is to do Perſonally and alone; ſuch are all thoſe things which He did for us in performing all that was required in the *C*ovenant of Redemption: He alone made ſatisfaction to Divine Juſtice, and pai'd the Price of our Ranſome, fulfilling all Righteouſneſs. But there are other Works which He becomes engaged to worke in us, as the efficient, which yet are to be done by us, by the ſtrength of His Grace: That we are to do ſomething if we would inherit Eternall Life, is the Language of all Goſpel-precepts; Hence, we ſtand engaged in the Goſpell-Covenant to the performance of them: But God had no reaſon to truſt us, being all lyars, and having proved falſe in one *C*ovenant already: it was therefore needfull that Chriſt ſhould engage for us: Now theſe Works He doth not alone, but as He is the Head of the Church, and all influences into it, which flow from Him into the Body, theſe Works He performes by His Members. Theſe Works being required in the Covenant of Reconciliation, where Chriſt Myſticall, *i. e. C*hriſt and His *C*hurch are the Party engaging; hence they fail not to be of the Condition, though required at His Hands as the Head of it.

4. It is to be conſidered, that in the Act of Believing, the Soul doth not only give it ſelf up to Chriſt as the high Prieſt of his Reconciliation, but alſo as his Prophet, and his King, to be taught and to be ruled by Him, as one that knows he hath not skill or power to order and direct his own wayes: And this is properly that Obedience of Faith which Jeſus Chriſt (when He receives the Beleever into this Relation) undertakes to maintain and carry on in him. The Soul by Believing makes it ſure that Chriſt ſhall be his Helper, to ſupply him with all

that Grace whereby he may do all that which the Covenant requires of him: Hence, though we have Security from Christ to help us, yet this engagement of His takes not away the quality of a Condition from our duty: Only shewes us whither we must go, and where our dependance must be, if ever we hope to live as God's Covenant-People, who of our selves can do nothing.

If any shall (this notwithstanding) think it more fit and proper to call this Obedience, rather a Covenant-Command, than a Condition, I shall not be eager to dispute of terms, provided this one thing be granted, which cannot without opposing the truth be denyed, *viz.* That it is a part of the Gospell-way, necessary to Salvation (*i. e. Necessitate Præcepti & medii*) beside, or beyond which interpretation, I do not understand or urge the notion of a Condition in the Gospell-Covenant.

And now having discovered the Conditions propounded and required in this Covenant, the question under consideration, *viz.* VVhat it is to keep Covenant is easily hence answered: To keep Covenant is in generall to perform that Obligation we stand in to it; for Man to keep Covenant with God, is for him to performe the conditions of his Covenant. In particular, let us observe that our present discourse referrs to the visible dispensation of the Covenant, and our so being related to it, as it stands propounded on God's Part, and at least outwardly acknowledged and submitted to on our Part: The conditions then are all those things which the Gospel calls for at our hands, or prescribes to us as necessary to Salvation: and then to keep Covenant, is,

1. To believe in Jesus Christ for Life, *i. e.* for Grace and Glory: to go out of our selves to Him for all, and rely on, or place our hope and trust in Him alone: This every Member and Child of the Visible Church doth

stand

ſtand bound or engaged unto, and that upon no leſſe or lower conſiderations than Salvation and Damnation, *Mark*, 16. 16. In which believing they chuſe God alone for their Portion, Jeſus Chriſt for their only Redeeming-Mediator, the Spirit for their only ſanctifying Leader: They renounce all other vain truſt and confidence: They ſay, *Aſhur ſhall not ſave us*, they *caſt their Idols to Moles and to the Bats*. They reſt not upon the Works of their own hands, nor hope to receive any thing at the Hands of God for their own ſakes: They ſeek the Glory of God, and give to Him the Honour and Praiſe due to His Name, they go to Him for all they want, they acknowledge His Mercy and Grace in all they receive, &c. The truth is, it is a large and vaſt condition to believe, and it is a certain and undeniable truth, that every one in the Viſible Church is a Covenant-breaker till he believes, *i. e.* he falls ſhort of his engagement.

x *In fœdere gratiæ Deus promittit homini ſe fore ipſi patrem in Chriſto, ſi filialem præſtiterit obedientiam.* Alſted *Theol. P.* 375.

2 x To perform Goſpel-Obedience, which is the fruit and exerciſe of Faith; and is therefore in Scripture called the Obedience of Faith, becauſe it is nothing elſe but Faith in Exerciſe, animating, quickning and improving all the Graces of Sanctification to their proper actions. This Obedience is vaſtly differing from that which is required in the Covenant of Works: For, although it be the ſame Morall-Law which is the Rule of Obedience required or preſcribed in both the Covenants, yet it is preſented under divers conſiderations: In the firſt Covenant it was conſidered as the Antecedent-condition, and Meritorious cauſe of Man's Bleſſedneſs, and this Bleſſedneſs was therein propounded under the notion of a reward of that Obedience: But here it is only as a conſequent condition or the way in which we are to attain unto felicity,

Fam,

Jam. 1. 25. Besides, in the former it was to be performed by Man's own strength, or the improvement of that Grace which was given Man in his *C*reation: In this it is to be done by the help and strength of *C*hrist, *Phil.* 4. 14. In the former it was to be done perfectly, else Man was to lose his Reward: In this (though every Beleever ought to press earnestly after perfection, and be sensible of every defect and bewail it before God, yet) none is to expect to be perfect in this Life, but God hath respect to, and readily acknowledgeth the sincerity and integrity of His People. In the former God punished the least defect with Death; in this God is tender and pittifull to His poor People, bearing with their many infirmities, and accepting of their humble confession and Repentance: There God animedverted on the least defect, here he covers many transgressions: There he cast the Sinner out of His favour. Here His Children are only chastised, but His Love is not taken away, nor Covenant prophaned, *Psal.* 89. 30. &c. In the former, Repentance was of no worth nor account, for it left no room for it; in this the People of God may in a way of Repentance obtain Pardon, and there Sin is done away, *Psal.* 32. 7. 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. These differences well observed will give us Light into the true Nature of Gospel-Obedience and there are these things requisite in it.

1. That there be a sincere and hearty Love and respect to all God's Commandments. *David* (an Evangelicall Man) professeth his endeared Love to God's Law, and declares that His precepts are his delight; yea, that they are sweet and precious to him, *Psal.* 19. 7. *&c.* Yea, though he is not unacquainted with his own frailty, yet by this token he is quieted, and not afraid of being put to shame, *Psal.* 119. 6.

2. That this be confirmed by a faithfull endeavour after conformity to the whole known and revealed will of God: This hath its rise from the former, for if we do love

love God, we will keep His Commandments, *Joh.* 14. 15. *i. e.* According to the meaſure of Grace received, we will obſerve them with an upright and devoted heart, *David* will exerciſe himſelf in the Law day and night, becauſe he loves it, *Pſal.* 119. We muſt avoid Temptations, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, walk according to Rule, do our outmoſt that God may be glorified by us, and therefore endeavour conformity to His holineſs in our whole converſation.

3. To bear about an humble ſenſe or conſciouſneſs of, and a Spirit of mourning for our frailties and dayly neglects; we muſt bewail both our impotency and exorbitancy: Though we do Sin (for who lives and Sins not) yet we do not allow it, though we do omit much of our duty, yet we condemn our ſelves for it: Though Sin be too ſubtile and potent for us, and often we are entangled by it, yet we do account it a ſore Oppreſſion, a diſtreſſing Captivity, and cry out earneſtly to Heaven for help and deliverance: This was *Pauls* Spirit and practice, *Rom.* 7. This ſhews the heart is true to God, and is therefore in his account and interpretation eſteemed Evangelicall-Obedience.

4. That we do conſtantly repair to Chriſt for His ſtrength to help us, and that ſolely relying upon His Grace to give us favour and acceptance with God, and ultimately reſolving all our hopes, not into our own, but His Righteouſneſs. This is that which we are engaged and required to do in the New-Covenant, and if we do not this, let our Obedience be never ſo ſpecious, it is ſtill reputed but legall, and ſo becomes worthleſs. Senſe of our own infirmity diſabling us from doing duty perfectly, ought not to diſcourage us from endeavouring to do it ſincerely, but its uſe is to teach us this Leſſon, that ſince our ſtrength is not in our ſelves, but in another, we ought to go out of our ſelves and repair unto Him. All the Grace and Strength of Jeſus Chriſt is exhibited

exhibited and profered in the *C*ovenant for the help of a Beleever in performing of his duty, and here appears the VVork of Faith in quickning and enlivning of Obedience, that it enables us to rely upon this Strength of Christ for our help, and (having placed our hope here) in this confidence to set about our duty: And now, having cast our selves upon *C*hrist to go on in it with courage, not being dismaid for its imperfection, but leaving it with Him to render the Services we do acceptable with His Father, looking to have our Prayers and Performances offered, not by themselves, but with his sweet incense: And hence, when we have thus by the grace of God done our duty, we are to have no confidence in the worth and merit of our Obedience, to purchase ought of favour and happiness for us; but to acquiesce (in the way of Obedience) only in the Righteousness of Christ, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9.

Thus we see the Dependance between the two *C*ovenants of Grace: The *C*ovenant of Reconciliation must alwayes be considered with the respect it hath to the Covenant of Redemption, going before it, and making way for it: for till we are Redeemed, we cannot be Reconciled. And when through the grace and help of Jesus *C*hrist our only Surety, we are enabled thus to walk and do, then do we in God's account keep Covenant with Him, we answer the Laws, and perform the Conditions of the *C*ovenant of Grace enjoyned us, and are acknowledged by him to be the subjects of His special Grace, and Heirs of everlasting Mercyes.

IV. *What are those everlasting Mercies that are engaged in the Covenant?*

Ans. These Mercies comprize under them, the whole blessing of the New-*C*ovenant: whatsoever is in particular promised to the People of God in His Word, comes under this generall Denomination in our Text.

These Mercies are called Everlasting for severall Reasons. 1. From

1. From the Bigger and better Part of them, which are Poſitively and properly ſo: Not but that there are Tranſitory and Paſſing Mercies, included in the Covenant-Promiſe: For, *Godlineſs hath the Promiſe of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. But theſe Temporall Mercies are (though great in reſpect of our deſerving, who are leſſe then the leaſt of God's Mercies, yet) Little and of Low Conſideration, when they are compared with thoſe which are in reverſion in another World, and are therefore Swallowed up and loſt in the Contemplation of theſe.

2. To note to us the Originall and Continuance of the whole Series of Covenant-Mercies: For their Originall, they proceed from Everlaſting Love, and are therefore ſaid to be from Everlaſting: The Love of God decreed them before the Creature had a Being: yea, and in the Covenant of Redemption they were provided & ſecured for God's Elect before Man either was, or actually ſtood in need of any Mercy. for their continuance alſo, although ſome Mercies are tranſient and paſſe away, and there are innumerable of theſe that viſit and paſs by us every day, and when we have taſted of them, are gone, yet Mercies continue, and the People of God ſhall enjoy all needfull bleſſings through Time and Eternity: they are Springs whoſe Waters though alwayes running, yet never fail, as one Mercy goes, another comes, and they ſhall never ceaſe, *Pſal.* 82. 33. And are therefore called Everlaſting.

3. Becauſe all God's Mercies, that are Covenant-Bleſſings, or Fulfillings of the Promiſe, are leading to Everlaſting good: It is the difference whereby Mercies in themſelves, or Materially, the ſame, become (as it were) of another kind to the People of God. God only bleſſeth the wicked, but *in bleſſing He bleſſeth His Children: i.e.* puts real ſure Bleſſings into their Mercies: The Mercies of common Providence are every way fading Mercies;

cies, they are Snares and Traps, and being misused become a Curse to those that possess them, the comfort of them soon dyes, but the bitterness abides. But *C*ovenant-Mercies are Sanctified Mercies, have a stamp of Love upon them, and contribute to the eternall welfare of the souls of God's People, *Rom.* 8. 28.

To enumerate these Mercies in particular, would be an endless Task: So rich is God in Mercy and goodness to all those that fear Him: It is the Psalmists ready acknowledgment, *Psal.* 139. 17, 18. Their number passeth the reach of our Arithmetick: But if we look upon them in the gross, they will fall under three comprehensive Heads: Temporall, Spiritual, and Eternall; in each of which Bundles are contained favours exceeding Count.

1. Temporall, the Promise which is made to godliness concerns the Life which now is, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. Whatsoever the wicked enjoy in this World by meer indulgence, all this the People of God have by Promise: and that which those have very little reason to hope for, these may lawfully challenge as their own: If you search the Scripture, there you shall find, that God is very large in His Promise to his People upon this account, if they will obey him, and keep his *C*ovenant. Particularly, See *Deut.* 28. begin, Covenant-Relation engageth God's Love to His People, and Covenant-Promise obligeth His fidelity: If God feed the Ravens, much more will He take care for His Children: If God give good things to them that hate Him, much more will He be bountifull to those that love Him.: If God can hold back His Wrath from, and give Mercies to the Children of the Curse, then surely the Children of Promise shall not be forgotten.

2. Spiritual, by which I understand, all that Grace and those supplyes of Soul-good which are needfull for the nourishment and comfort of the hearts of the People

of

of God in this Life, thoſe that keep Covenant with God may go, by vertue of this Promiſe for all that is needfull to enable them to keep Covenant, and to encourage them in ſo doing: Grace ſufficient to carry him through, was promiſed to *Paul*, and ſo it is to every Child of God as well: under theſe ſpiritual Mercies are comprehended all thoſe means of Grace which are ſanctified and improved by the Spirit of God, and all the ſaving fruits of thoſe means: All the graces of the Spirit, and the exerciſe of thoſe Graces: yea, and the ſpiritual uſe and improvement of all the providences of God; theſe are things of ſuch ineſtimable value, that they exceed the capacity of any naturall Man to conceive or underſtand what they be, ſo *Paul* commends them, *y* 1 *Cor.* 2. 9.

y Bolton, *Directions to walk with God.*

3. Eternall, in which I aim at all thoſe which are reſerved and kept in ſtore to be the compleat happineſs, and perfect glory of the People of God in the other Life: Theſe are called the Kingdome, *Luk.* 12. 32. Of theſe the Apoſtle *John* ſpeaks in a yet more ſublime manner than *Paul* doth of the former, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. Unregenerate Men are not acquainted with ſpiritual Bleſſings. But Saints themſelves (here) know but little of thoſe which are eternall: All we can know of them at preſent, is only thus much, that they ſhall make the enjoyer happy beyond his thoughts, expectations, or poſſible deſires, in which happineſs there ſhall be found no mixture or allay of any trouble or grief, nor ſhall there be any either kind or degree of good wanting to make it perfect up to the outmoſt of created capacity to be enterteined withall: Theſe are in brief the everlaſting Mercyes of the Covenant, the diſtinct knowledge of them is reſerved for Glory.

V. In order to the evidencing and clearing up of the truth of the Doctrine that theſe mercies are certainly engaged;

gaged, it is needfull that we firſt conſider ſomething about the nature of the Covenant-Promiſe, and how, or in what way God fulfills it, becauſe many weak and tempted Chriſtians are apt to ſtumble and be in the dark about this matter: I ſhall only very briefly here preſent theſe following concluſions.

1. That the Mercies lying in the Covenant-Promiſe do ſome of them bear a proper reſpect to the end, and others to the means which are leading to the end: And there is a great difference between theſe; it is therefore good that a Chriſtian ſhould be well skilled in this diſtinction, and to know to which of theſe two every Mercy of the Promiſe doth belong. The Reaſon of this diſtinction is, becauſe, as there is a glorious happy end to which God leads all his People, ſo there is an order of means by which he leads them home to this end; the end is Glory, the means are Suſtentation Protection, and Preſervation in a way of holineſs, you ſhall find both theſe joyned, in *Pſal.* 16. ult. alſo *Pſal.* 73. 24.

2. That as the end is certain and unfailing, ſo alſo are the means ſo far as they do abſolutely reſpect the end: *i. e.* means ſhall never be ſo wanting as to fruſtrate the end. The end is indubititable, no Beleever ſhall fall ſhort of a happy Eſtate after this Life, in the enjoyment of perfect Bleſſedneſs, and full Fruition of the good of all the Promiſes: That this be not diſappointed, a ſafe Conduct in the way, and preſervation from failing, and an accompliſhing of all that in us which is needfull to prepare and fit us for this glorious Eſtate, cannot be wanting: The Pſalmiſt can therefore acquieſce in this, after many wrangling thoughts which have diſturbed his mind, and thrown him into much diſorder about many particular diſpenſations of Providence; here he reſts, *Pſal.* 73. 24. *Thou ſhalt guide, &c.*

3. That in the fulfilling of theſe Promiſes which come

under the Title or Head of Means, God reſerves a Soveraignty to Himſelf in regard of the particular way of Performance of them: And here we may obſerve,

1. That as the good Promiſed was firſtly made over to Chriſt in the Covenant of Redemption, and by Him purchaſed in behalf of *H*is Redeemed, ſo alſo the diſpenſation of it is put into his hands, as he is the Mediator of the *C*ovenant of Reconciliation; it is his purchaſe, and therefore called the *purchaſed Poſſeſſion*, *Eph.* 1. 14. Nor is it heaven alone that is at his diſpoſe, but the orderly management of all the affairs of this World too: As *Pſal.* 2. 8, 9, 10. *H*ence alſo, all *Treaſures* are ſaid to be *Laid up in Him*, *Col.* 2. 3. And he gives them out to whom he ſees meet, according to his own pleaſure, *Joh.* 17. 2. Chriſt as he is the *H*ead of the Church hath all in him, and he influenceth it into his Members according to his own Wiſdome, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30.

2. That Chriſt in fulfilling for his People all the good which reſpects the Means, bears a conſtant eye to, and aim at the end: The ſumme and ſubſtance of the buſineſs lying on his hands, is, to bring his own *to be there where He is*, *Joh.* 17. 24. *To bring many Sons to Glory*, *Heb*, 2. 10. And if he do this, he hath accompliſhed that part of the Covenant in which God ſtands engaged to us, and for which he is his Father's Surety. If a Beleever be brought ſafe to heaven, be it by what means ſoever, he hath no ground to complain that God hath not fulfilled the whole Promiſe for him: If the means fail not of reaching to the end, God is no Covenant-breaker, though we (through darkneſs and diffidency) may ſometime be ready to ſay as *David*, *Doth His Promiſe fail for evermore?*

3. *H*ence, Chriſt reſerves a great latitude in his diſpenſation of temporall good to us. The Bleſſings of this Life (having no other conſideration in the *C*ondition required

required of us, then a faithfull improvement of them ſo far as God ſhall beſtow them upon us, and a contented wanting them when He withholds them from us, may be variouſly diſpenſed to us without any infringement of the Promiſe. It is not neceſſary to our being brought unto Glory that we be thus or ſo rich, healthy, abounding in Creature Comforts, &c. Poverty, Diſgrace, Sickneſs, &c, will be no objection againſt any one in the great day, why they may not enter and poſſeſs the Kingdome. Agen, abundance of theſe things, is often to fallen Man an occaſion of many temptations to forget God and Glory, to neglect his Work and Duty, and thereby would obſtruct his main end, if God in Wiſdome did not prevent. Furthermore, it is not abſolutely neceſſary that a Beleever ſhould have any of theſe thiugs, only hypothetically. Chriſt can take them hence to Glory when He ſees meet. *Hence*, though when God gives us any of theſe things, it is our duty to accept and improve them as *Covenant-Mercies*; yet, when he withholds them, we have no reaſon, either to think our ſelves therefore ſtrangers from the *Covenant*, or him to have forgotten what he hath promiſed; much leſs when we find a great deal of outward bitterneſs in the enjoyment of them: For Chriſt hath tacked a croſs to this part of the Promiſe, *Mark* 10. 30.

4. Hence alſo, in his performing of ſpiritual good, he may give it in what degree he ſees meet, and yet not fail of fulfilling the Promiſe: For though here are many things that come under the Covenant-*Condition*, as requiſit to be performed by us, yet the New-*Covenant*, moſt abſolutly reſpects the *Reality*, and not the *Degree*: & here are ſome ſpiritual bleſſings not neceſſary to our performing the Condition. True Faith is required, ſincere Obedience, real and active Patience, ſpiritual *Hope*, and ſmall Perſeverance: But weak Faith comes

under

under the Promiſe as well as ſtrong, and ſo of the reſt. Now, if God maintain Grace alive, that it dyes not, it ſhall attain its end, *viz.* Glory. Although it may not here be ſo illuſtrous, nor comfortable in ſome as in others: And as to other ſpiritual favours which are not ſo much of the *eſſe*, as the *bene eſſe* of a ſtate of Grace; here alſo we muſt acknowledge a great latitude, ſuch as are, ſtrong Aſſurances, cleared Evidences, abounding Comforts, and overflowing Joyes: Chriſt may withdraw theſe as often, and as long, and to what degree he ſees meet, and yet not fail of his Promiſe. If he carry us through a ſhady vally, yet if he carry us to glory, if he lead us in the dark where we ſee neither Sun, Moon nor Stars, yet if he feel out our way for us, and carry us home, it ſufficeth and we are to truſt, *Iſa.* 50. 10. *Pſal.* 23. 4.

4. The compleat fulfilling of many ſpiritual Promiſes is reſerved till another Life. There is a near relation between things ſpiritual, and things heavenly: Grace differs from Glory but in degree: Hence, as we are not to expect to have the Promiſes of Glory fulfilled here. ſo neither ſuch as belong to Grace to be compleated. God hath ſaid and Promiſed that he will *take away all Sin*, that he will *pluck out of us the heart of Stone*, that he will *give us compleat Victory over Satan*, and many the like Words he hath engaged in, concerning which a Beleever is many times ready to wonder, to think that God in the Promiſe ſpeaks ſo largly and liberally, and yet in his Providence ſeems to perform it ſo little and ſo meanly in him; & now Satan tempts, his heart relents, doubts begin to aſſault him, and he is ready to ſay, ſurely I have but deceived my ſelf: and why? The reaſon is, he forgets that here we are to live by Faith, and not by Sight. The Promiſe is ſure, and ſhall without fail be fulfilled; but when? Why? When he hath patiently waited, and comes to leave this, and go to another World, but in

the mean while, we are to expect and be content with nothing but earnests, and some smal essayes and tastes of these things, *viz.* Enough to keep him up to his Work, and to strengthen Faith in Hope to be waiting in wayes of Obedience for the accomplishment of it.

Now to clear up that there are such everlasting Mercies engaged, I might heap up Scriptures in plenty, if need required it; and indeed we have no other Demonstration of this Truth, then what God hath therein revealed unto us. For when Man had fallen away from his Obedience to the Covenant of Works, and thereby involved himself in guilt, and a curse; who should discover to him God's Thoughts and Counsels of Mercy, or speak to him of a Covenant of Grace, but God Himself? The Word of God is therefore full for the confirmation of our Faith in this point; every Promise in it is big with or full of Mercies; it were endless to particularize. Now the Blessings of the New-Covenant are called Mercies, not only because it was God's free unmerited Mercy to exhibit them to Man now fallen, and forfeited into the hands of revenging Justice; but also because the way of his communicating them unto us is such, as there is no merit of ours interposing it self to procure the application of them unto us; but they come to us for the merit sake of Christ alone, *Ezek.* 36. 22.

But the main things to be enquired into for the clearing up of the Doctrine, are two, *viz.* 1. Why God dispenseth these Mercies in the way of a Covenant? 2. How far they are to be accounted conditional in the Covenant-Promise?

1. *Why God dispenseth these Mercies in way of Covenant?*

Ans. Besides the free Soveraign liberty which God challengeth justly of dealing with His Creatures in what way seems most meet to His own good pleasure, which is

is His own Rule, and ought with greateſt veneration to be acknowledged by them: This way of Tranſaction is the beſt fitted and accommodated to the ſtate of fallen Man; and that,

1. Becauſe, having been at firſt placed under a Covenant of Works, he could not ſo well be delivered from the fears and terrours ariſing from his apprehended violation of it, and the curſes thereby brought upon himſelf, but by the diſcoveries of a New Covenant of Grace. If God had not proclaimed a Covenant of Grace, Man would have been held under the tenor of the Law. *Adam* (now fallen) was under the amazment of that threatning of Death, *Gen.* 2.17. Nor could he diſcover any the leaſt glimmerings of Hope till the Covenant-Promiſe was made known for his encouragment, *Gen.* 3.15. The Curſe denounced came by a Covenant, and therfore the Mercy promiſed muſt come in the ſame way, that it may be every whit as plain and ſure to us, for they are only Covenant-Mercies, which are ſure Mercies. *Iſa.* 55. 3.

2. Becauſe hereby, not only Salvation it ſelf, but the way to the attaining of it, is alſo made plain and clear. If God had only made it known, or declared that he would ſave by Might, and by Power a number of fallen *Adam*'s Progeny, there might indeed have been ſome generall and languiſhing hope afforded to particular Men and Women, but it had been upon very weak and uncertain grounds; nor could their hopes have been able to ballance their fears; their ſtate of Miſery being certain and evidently demonſtrable, but their happineſs (at leaſt) but in a remote probability. But when God not only reveals Salvation to be provided, but publiſheth the way in which it is to be attained, and certainly enjoyed: Now the People of God have an argument, and an evidence, and a clear manifeſtation of the particular love of God to them. Now all this is done in the way

of a Covenant, in which there are Termes, Propoſitions, and Conditions. Thus it is that we come to be aſcertained, not only that a number ſhall be ſaved, but who they be: They are here Characterized to us: and now Man knows what he hath to ſtand to, how to erect his hopes, and confirm them: By this way there comes to be a very fair intelligence between God and his Creatures, *Iſa.* 1. 16. with 19, 20.

3. Becauſe in this way God declares and glorifies not only his ſoveraign Mercy, but alſo his infinite Holineſs and Juſtice. If Man had been ſaved in any other way but this, God might and ſhould have been eternally acknowledged a moſt mercifull God: But how to have reconciled Juſtice and Mercy, and vindicated the Glory of his Holineſs, as well as diſcovered the riches of his Grace, it is not in our reach to underſtand how ever this could have been done declaratively (as things were circumſtanced) but in the way of a Covenant. But here God diſplayes all theſe Articles: His Holineſs, in making us Holy, in having to do with Sinners only by a holy and ſpotleſs Mediator: His Juſtice in taking full ſatisfaction at the hands of Chriſt for all that which the violated Covenant of Works made demands of to the leaſt tittle, and yet his Mercy in accepting of us, though unworthy Sinners, juſtly removed from his favour, and both Juſtice and Mercy united, in the exchange made between Chriſt and us; *He being made Sin for us, who knew none, viz.* Imputatively; and *we made the Righteouſneſs of God by Him.* It is in the Covenant that all theſe Attributes diſplay themſelves, *Pſal.* 85. 10, 11.

2. *How far they are to be accounted Conditionall in the Covenant-Promiſe?*

Anſ. It is certain they were Conditionally propounded to Chriſt in the Covenant of Redemption, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *When thou ſhalt make His Soul an offering for Sin, He ſhall ſee His ſeed.* For although they are now certainly put into

into his hand, and left to his diſpoſall, *Joh.* 5, 21, 22. Yet theſe are ever to be lookt upon as a purchaſe bought with ſuch a price; without the payment of which he had never had the Mediatorial diſpenſation of them conferred upon him, had he failed in his ſatisfaction, theſe Mercyes could never have been ours, but this is not of our purpoſe:

Obſerve then,

2. That they are alſo Conditionall in the Viſible and Miniſterial diſpenſation of the Covenant of Reconciliation. The Goſpell according to the tenor in which it is publiſhed unto Men, makes profers of theſe Mercyes to none, nor engageth them by Promiſe unto any, but upon Termes, which all thoſe that will enjoy them muſt ſubſcribe, and performe. Neither can any Goſpell Miniſter in Chriſt's Name, give unto any Man the leaſt aſſurance of enjoying the promiſed Mercy, but upon theſe Termes. We cannot ſay unto any Man in particular, poſitively, and without any limitation you ſhall be ſaved. All that we can ſay to them is, If *you believe, you ſhall be ſaved*: If *you be faithfull to Death you ſhall receive a Crown of Life*; nor can we conclude the good eſtate of any, further than we diſcover in them, ſuch things as accompany ſalvation; on which grounds we may hope well of ſome Men, but we can ſay no more of any, though they be admitted never ſo near unto God in viſible enjoyment of the priviledges of the Goſpell. *Paul* himſelf could ſay no more to his Romans, *Rom.* 8. 13. nor to any of the Churches whom he directed his Epiſtles unto. The Apoſtles wrote and ſpake to thoſe whom they knew to be viſible Beleevers, as to ſuch for whom they had Charity, and yet as to ſuch whom they did not know, but that (many of them) might in the day of Revelation be found really unbeleevers, except they were by ſpeciall Revelation made to underſtand other wayes of ſome

particulars, we therefore can Preach Salvation but Conditionally.

3. Though it is in no wayes to be denyed that every true Beleever is under a firm Promiſe, which God will never Repent of, and hath therefore in him a certain evidence of his Salvation, which God, that cannot lye hath promiſed to beſtow upon him, and hath alſo an undertaking Surety, *viz.* Jeſus Chriſt, who will certainly bring him unto Glory, yet in ſome reſpect the Promiſe may be lookt upon as Conditionall to ſuch an one, *viz.*

1. If he have a grounded and apprehended aſſurance of his Title to the Promiſe, he hath gained, and doth keep it by diſcerning and apprehending of the Condition wrought in him: If he knows that theſe Mercies are his, he firſt knows this, that he is (by Grace) made ſuch an one as they do belong to by Promiſe. To make the Promiſe it ſelf to be an evidence of our intereſt in the Promiſe, What is it elſe but to make the queſtion it ſelf the third argument by which it is proved? Then which way of arguing what can be more fooliſh and ridiculous? if it be known, it muſt be known by the Condition: So the Apoſtle *John* argues, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14.

2. Upon ſuppoſition (for we may ſuppoſe things that never ſhall be) that a true Beleever might fall from the Condition of the Covenant totally and finally, it is certain he ſhould loſe, or miſs of Salvation, and not inherit theſe everlaſting Mercies, *Heb.* 10. 38. *If any draw back, my Soul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.* Every Beleever ſhall certainly be ſaved; that is an impregnable truth: but yet if the Beleever could become an unbeleever and ſo remain, he ſhould not be ſaved, for there ſhal no unbeleever, ſo dying, go to heaven. The ſumme is, that a Beleevers Title to theſe Mercies is continued by preſerving and fortifying and rendering immortall

mortall that Grace whereby they may keep Covenant with *God*, *Jer.* 32. 40.

3. That the People of God themſelves do miſs of many preſent bleſſings, and ſuffer many preſent ſorrows and evils, through their heedleſneſs and particular ſinfull failures in their Covenant dutie: though they fall not wholly from it. It is true, that in theſe diſpenſations God Acts very Soveraignly; but ſtill, it is our duty to keep a conſtant eye to the Covenant, and thereby to diſcern of Gods both Righteouſneſs and Mercy. Why is a plague brought upon *Iſrael*, but for *David*'s Sin? Why muſt the Sword never depart from his Houſe, but becauſe he hath faultered in the Covenant? *Pſal* 89. 30. &c. That is ſpoken of Chriſt's ſpiritual Seed of whom *David* was a Type. God by thus doing aſſerts His own holineſs, and lets his Covenant-People know how much Sin is diſpleaſing to him. And hence alſo, if at any time we eſcape puniſhment, when we have provoked God by our careleſs neglects, we muſt acknowledge it his merciſull indulgence, but if we ſuffer Sorrow, and broken Bones for our faults, we muſt ſay as *David*, *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Thou art juſt when thou Judgeſt.*

USE I.

For information, we may hence learn,

Collect. 1. To take notice of the wondrous kindneſs and good Will of God exhibited to Men in the Covenant of Reconciliation. The very News of a Covenant between *God* and fallen Man, is matter of juſt admiration: And the Matter or Contents of it call the Children of Men to ſee and adore, *viz.* That *God* is in the diſpenſation of it, Reconciling the World to himſelf. And there are five things in ſpecial, which do ſerve to illuſtrate the great kindneſs of *God* to the Children of Men in it, *viz.*

I. *If we ſeriouſly conſider who they be that are the Subjects*

jects with whom this Covenant is made: There is an Emphasis in that Phrase, Luk. 2. 14. Good-Will towards Men, *and that is discoverable in many respects. If we Consider.*

1. What Man had done to alienate God's heart and good Will from him for ever; who, when God had Created and put him in a glorious Estate, given him an holy Law for his direction; furnished him with his own Image, implanting all needfull graces to render his Obedience to that Law siezable, made a good Covenant with him, a Covenant of Life, put all the visible Creation in subjection to him, and promised him all happiness if he would obey him: He, this notwithstanding, willfully slighted his Law, profaned his Covenant, abused all his Favours, trampled upon his Glory, and set up vile things in his room: how should God have good thought more of such a Creature?

2. That God had no need of Man to glorifie him, nor was he obliged to any such way as this to glorifie himself by him. He could have gotten himself a Name by destroying him, and made his Justice triumph in everlasting revenges. He had glorious Angels enough to do him Service, and the residue of the Spirit was with him, whereby he could have Created a New Generation of Men, even out of the very Stones, had he been meet.

3. That Man was in himself a Creature serviceless as to any actual employment for the glory of God, he was *without strength, Rom.* 5. 6. More cost must be laid out upon him to make him a vessell of glory, and fit him up for his Master's use, than to have made a new World. He was a Creature like to be a great tryall and exercise to Divine Patience as long as he lived: A Creature not fit to be trusted agen with any Stock of grace, having so wofully failed, and discovered himself faithless in his first Trust.

4. That

4. That when there were ſo many fallen Angels, Creatures capable of doing more ſervice, might they but have been reſtored, *C*reatures, for their Make, more Noble and Laudable, and that yet notwithſtanding he ſhould paſs by theſe, and have nothing to do with them in way of a ſecond *C*ovenant, but leave them held under that juſt condemnation in which they had involved themſelves to be held Priſoners of Juſtice, without any hope for ever, that he might look in Mercy upon Men! This is a thought the Apoſtle could not entertain without very great admiration, *Heb.* 2. 16.

5. That they were ſuch Creatures into whom the Fall had put ſuch an Antipathy and Enmity againſt any manner of treating and Covenanting with God, or to have any thing to do with him. They were enemies of grace, and therefore when he comes to treat with them about ſuch matters as concern their eternal Salvation, they reſiſt his Spirit, and reject his Profers: This both Chriſt and his Apoſtles found, and this *G*od knew before he treated with them, they were meer enmity, *Rom.* 8. 7. And that yet he ſhould condeſcend to have to do with ſuch a ſubject in the treatyes of a ſecond *C*ovenant, this is his wondrous kindneſs to Man.

2. If we conſider the great things which were needfull to be done in order to the bringing about of this Covenant of Reconciliation. It was no light or little matter to prepare the way for this treaty of correſpondence between God and Man, to ſet open a door of Salvation before Man, and make the profers of entring into a New Covenant of Life with Him. z We muſt therefore alwayes carry in our minds, that the Covenant of Reconciliation points us to, and gives us notice of the Covenant of Redemption neceſſarily, going before and making clear

z *The Cov. made with us, hath its ſtability from the Covenant made with* Chriſt; *& therefore this muſt be the foundation of that.* Ark of *C*ov. *P.* 28.

clear the way for it, without which it could never have been propounded to fallen Man. It is here altogether needleſs to diſpute whither God puniſh Sin by neceſſity of Nature: this is certain, and by all Orthodox maintained; That God's holineſs and Juſtice were ſo concerned and ingaged in the Covenant of Works, that without due and full ſatisfaction given to that Covenant in all it required, there was no way in which Reconciliation could be expected: And that Man by himſelf ſhould ever be able to make this ſatisfaction, and thereby obtain his Peace, was impoſſible; It lay therefore upon God Himſelf, to contrive and effect it, in which Contrivance, His Wiſdome, Power, and Love do wonderfully appear. If there had been nothing elſe needed but an act of meer Pardon to have paſt upon Man in this Tranſaction, the matter had not been ſo much, nor had the Grace of the Covenant ſhined forth ſo eminently: But, *that God might be both juſt, and the Juſtifier* of the ungodly, that the Penalty of the firſt Covenant might be exacted, and yet Man ſaved, this was the great Thing of Weight. Hence, then is matter of our admiration, that the Goſpell-Covenant is founded on the Everlaſting-Covenant, between God and Chriſt. The Goſpell-Covenant propounds Salvation freely, *Iſai* 55. 1. *Rev.* 22. 17. But that it may ſo do, it is prevented, or way is made for it by the Covenant of Redemption, in which this free Salvation is Bought with a ſufficient and Valuable Price. 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. When we hear in the Goſpell that God profers Mercy and Grace to Sinners; this declares wondrous condeſcendency in God; but when we hear that we were under the Law, Condemned to dy, and could no way ſave our ſelves, and there was no Salvation poſſible to be obtained, except the firſt Covenant were ſatisfied, and that the eternall Son of God undertook for this; Yea, engaged Himſelf in a Covenant to His Father, to take our Nature upon Him, and do our

works

Works for us, and bear the Curſe in our ſtead, which we ſhould have born, and that otherwayes there could have been no hope for our Salvation: And that the neceſſity of ſuch an interpoſition did not ſhut up the Bowels of Divine Favour againſt us, but that he brake through this difficulty, and undertook to take away all theſe obſtructions; this is a great argument of His ineffable Love: And it ſhould deeply affect us to think that every Tender of Salvation which is made unto us, is made through the bloud of a Redeemer, elſe we ſhould not have heard or had one gracious Profer or Promiſe, ſo much as *C*onditionally propounded unto us.

3. If we conſider the great benefits which are propounded and preſented to us in the Covenant. They are Infinite and Everlaſting Mercies: All our Wants are here ſupplyed, All our deſires are filled, All our Miſeries are removed by it. The Benefits are Great:

WHETHER,

1. Negative or thoſe great Evils which it brings with it a freedom from: Man's Fall had ruined, undone, bankrupted him: Man had procured to himſelf the Wrath of an Holy God, the Curſe of a Righteous Law; Had pulled down Vengeance on his own head, and made himſelf a Prey to the Miſeries of this and another World: But the New-Covenant opens to him a way for the eſcaping of all this: It diſcovers how he may get free from all this Evil: How he may be Atoned unto God, reconciled to the Law, and delivered from the Curſes and *M*iſeries he was expoſed unto, here is the firſt good News of *M*an's eſcape made known.

2. Poſitive, or thoſe good things which it entitles them unto who embrace it Cordially; which are Juſtification, not only Negative in Abſolution from the Curſe

Curſe, but Poſitive too, in declaring the Sinner to be Righteous: And Adoption, in giving us the Title of the Sons of God, and in beſtowing on us a real Right to all the good things of God, conſtituting us Co-heirs with Jeſus Chriſt in the purchaſed Poſſeſſion: And Sanctification, in being purged from the Filth, and delivered from the Dominion of Sin, and made partakers of the Graces of the Spirit, whereby we are enabled to ſerve God in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all our Dayes: And Glorification, in thoſe comfortable foretaſtes of Divine Love and Favour, which are better than Life, and aſſurances of inheritiug the whole Promiſe, and all the bleſſings laid up in it: Theſe are Covenant Bleſſings, *Text.*

4. If we conſider the eaſie Termes of it: If theſe benefits had been propounded to us upon Termes, hard and impoſſible, it had not been ſo glorious as now it is, but the fair Tenders, and facile Propoſitions, or Conditions that it ſtands upon, declare it to be a Rich Favour of God. Perfect Obedience to the Law, without any Slip or Failure, and perſonall full ſatisfaction for every Offence to it (thoſe Rigorous Termes to the Covenant of Works) become impoſſible to *Man* by reaſon of his Fall: Theſe therefore are Removed, and Evangelicall Gracious Termes are introduced in their Room. This *Covenant* declares that the Law is already ſatisfied, Divine Juſtice fully appeaſed, Salvation already compleatly wrought out and procured: It asks not of us any perſonall ſatisfaction to God for our offences, nor any meritorious Works of ours to be the Price of heaven's Purchaſe: All that which it requires is only theſe two Things.

1. That we believe in *Chriſt* for Life and Salvation, which is nothing elſe but only this, That we receive this Saviour, that we embrace Him with our whole hearts, as he is preſented in His Offices of a Redeemer, that we cloſe

with His ſatisfaction, and rely upon it for acceptance, and thereby make it our own, that it may ſtand up for us, and ſo become our Righteouſneſs, and interpoſe to ſatisfie for our Sins, and embrace His Obedience that it may merit our happineſs. How free a Salvation muſt that needs be which requires only our acceptance, that ſo it may become ours? This is all, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Joh.* 3. 16.

2. That we performe Goſpell-Obedience, which is nothing elſe but a ſincere devoting of our ſelves to God and His Service; a Dedication of our Lives to Him, and endeavouring that in all things we may act and be to His Glory. That we renounce the ſervice of Sin and Satan, unto which we were devoted, and caſt off the uſurped Government of other Lords, breaking all our Leagues with them, that we may be for Him, and no other, who hath bought us with His own Blood, that *we might be to Him Peculiar.* Now what leſs can he demand, or we pay to Him in order to the enjoyment of ſuch, and ſo great favours and benefits as thoſe are which we receive by the Covenant? The yoke of the Covenant of Grace, is an eaſie yoke, *Mat.* 11. ult.

5. If we conſider the great helps which the Covenant affords us for the fulfilling of theſe eaſie Termes. It muſt be acknowledged, that, as eaſie as they are, it exceeds the power of fallen Man by himſelf to performe them, by reaſon of the depravedneſs of his will and ſinfull enmity of his heart againſt God. Were we left to the ſtrength of our nature, we could never reach theſe Conditions. But to remedy this difficulty, the Covenant holds forth ſufficient relief againſt all theſe impediments. Hence, when the Covenant-Command bids us beleeve in Chriſt, to love and ſerve God. If we ſhould make ſuch an Objection as this, we cannot believe, we cannot obey, they are things above us, and hereupon we take diſcouragement, and begin

to

to think our *C*ondition is as remote from hopes of Life and Salvation as ever, we miſtake the *C*ovenant: For God knows that we cannot, and therefore, if we underſtand it aright, the *C*ovenant tells us that God doth not expect at our hands, nor would he accept of us, a Faith of our own making, or an Obedience done in our own ſtrength; and that if thus we ſhould go about to endeavour to keep *C*ovenant with him, we ſhould but irritate or make it void, and therefore *C*hriſt ſtanding as a Mediator in the Covenant, profers Himſelf to be our Surety and undertaker, to help us and worke all our works in and for us, that ſo we may perform the Termes, and attend the Requiſites of the Covenant; to worke Faith in us, and perfect us in holineſs, and ſo to keep us that we ſhall never depart from Him: And if we ſet about, or think to do any New-Covenant-duty, without an eye hither, and relyance here, we run upon wofull undoing miſtakes, and utterly loſe our ſelves. Let all theſe thoughts teach us to ſee and be affected with the excellency and Glory of the New Covenant.

Coll. 2. We have here a Rule by which to judge of the State and Condition of a People that are in Viſible Covenant with God; and alſo it teacheth us what is the true and proper ground of a ſtable hope, that ſuch a People may comfortably rely upon: We ſee that it all hath a certain reference to our dependance upon this one ſuppoſition, if they keep Covenant: This is the only third argument from whence may be drawn a ſure concluſion. For our more full and clear underſtanding of this, take theſe Aſſertions.

1. That for a People to enjoy all the viſible and outward means of Grace and Good, are outward and probationary favours. It is true, the Ordinances and Priviledges of the Goſpell may in a ſenſe be called ſpiritual, relating to the end they direct us unto, becauſe they are means guiding and leading us to the enjoyment of ſpiri-

ſpiritual good: but yet, in themſelves, as they are enjoyed by a viſible Church, viſibly, they are outward things: *i. e.* they are ſeparable from, and may be enjoyed without true, inward, ſaving Grace. A People *High* in means may be *Low* in Grace, yea empty of it: Such was *Capernaum*, *Mat.* 11. 23. *Laodicea* may be rich, and yet poor, *Rev.* 3. 17. &c. The beſt manured, and moſt carefully tended Vineyard, may bring forth wild and ſower Grapes, *Iſa.* 5. begin. And as they are outward, ſo alſo they are probationary; God tryes and proves a People with Goſpell-Priviledges. It is not ſufficient ſecurity to a Fig-tree, that becauſe it is planted in the Vineyard, and there carefully manured it ſhall therefore bear Figs: But the Husband Man comes year after year, to ſee whither it bears or no, and it is poſſible that he ſhall find it barren, though in the Vineyard. So that parable ſeems to hold forth, *Luk.* 13. 7, 8. God indeed expects Fruit according to his laying out, and that juſtly, and therefore He comes and looks for it, but it doth not alwayes prove according to His juſt expectation. Not that God can indeed be fruſtrated of any of His purpoſes: but God here ſpeaks after the manner of Men, who are wont to take pains in their Husbandry, with an eye to profit, and therefore obſerve what In-comes they receive.

2. To confide in theſe outward enjoyments as if they were real aſſurances of God's Complacency, is not Faith but Preſumption. They are indeed expreſſions of His beneficence, and bring with them a demonſtration of His great benevolence, but they are not aſſurances that He takes inward delight in ſuch a People; it is therefore a vain thing for them to repoſe their truſt & confidence in theſe things: And yet what more common then for the Children of Men thus to delude themſelves with ſuch opinions. To truſt in Church-Priviledges, as it is the moſt dangerous, ſo it is the moſt common

miſchief

miſchief and miſery of a People in viſible Covenant: God calls it, *To truſt in lying Words*, *Jer.* 7. 4. And it was a ground of the *Jews* ruine, who, when they abounded and were immerſed in Sin and Apoſtaſie, yet thought it enough to ſay, they were *Abraham*'s Children. *John Baptiſt* therefore ſo ſolemnly warnes them of the danger of it, *Mat.* 3. 9. *Think not to ſay*, &c. *q. d.* it's vain and will not profit. It is a moſt certain truth, that God indulgeth, not only with worldly favours, and the affluence of earthly abundance, but alſo with Goſpell-enjoyments, and plenty of outward means of Grace. A multitude that are the generation of His Wrath, and Children of His Curſe, who ſhall be preſt to eternall Death, and ſunk down to Hell by the weight of Ordinances: Such were thoſe unto whom the Prophet *Iſaiah* was ſent: *Iſai.* 6. 9, 10. The means they have had, have helped to fit them for their own place.

3. Where God hath done more for a People, there He expects more from them: Clear for this is that of our Saviour, *Luk.* 12. 48. *To whom much is given, of him ſhall be much required.* Chriſt in the Goſpell compares the Kingdom of Heaven (*i. e.* the viſible Church) to a Vineyard which the Owner Lett out to Husband-men, and in the ſeaſon ſent for his Revenue Goſpell-priviledges, as freely as Men think they are beſtowed upon them, (and indeed, inaſmuch as they are undeſerved, they are free) yet they ſhall find, when God comes to reckon with them, that they ſhall be called to a ſevere account for them: God keeps a Book of accounts (what ever Men think of Him, or how careleſs ſoever they may judge Him to be) and there He chargeth down to Mens ſcore, all the ſeverall particular diſburſements which He hath laid out upon this and that Man, theſe and thoſe Churches: You find the ſeverals enumerated of what he had been out upon, or done for his Vineyard, *Iſai.* 5. begin. And ſo he doth for every Vine-

yard,

yard, and every Fig-tree. Every Sermon that is Preached to them, every Sacrament that is adminiſtred, every Labourer whom He either fixeth amongſt them, or ſends occaſionally to do any thing in His Huſbandry there, theſe are in His Treaſures and a Memorial of them Regiſtred with Him, not an Item forgotten. Poor heathen have not ſo much to account for, as a People who are in viſible Covenant with God have. God connives at abundance of ſin in places of darkneſs, which He will not where Goſpell-light ſhines. Obſervable is that of the Apoſtle, *Acts.* 17. 30. *The Times of this Ignorance, God Winked at, but now commands all Men every where to Repent.* And what a difference of times, meerly upon the account of the Goſpell doth our Saviour Chriſt make! *Joh.* 15. 22. *If I had not come, and ſpoken to them, they had had no Sin, but now they have no cloke for their Sins.* *Judah* had the Temple and Ordinances with them, when the Ten Tribes, by their Rebellion from the houſe of *David*, and carnal policy of their own Kings, were obſtructed in, and much hindred from enjoyment of theſe liberties. God takes notice of it, and ſets a ſignal Caution upon it, *Hoſ.* 4. 15. *Though* Iſrael *play the harlot, let not* Judah *offend.* The ſumme is, the more liberal God hath been to a People, the greater accounts they have to make up with Him.

4. Nothing ſooner, or more provokes God then the abuſing or not well improving of viſible Covenant-priviledges. We ſhall find how God expoſtulates with *Iſrael* in theſe very terms, *Amos*, 3. 2. *Thee only have I known &c.* The greater the kindneſs is that is abuſed, the greater a provocation it muſt needs be: Now Covenant-priviledges are the beſt and moſt exeellent Priviledges which a People can enjoy. It was the *Jews* advantage taken notice of by the Apoſtle, with a

Note of ſpecialty put upon it, *Rom.* 3. 1, 2. *Chiefly, that to them were committed the Oracles of God.* And when *David* had enumerated the ſundry favours which God had beſtowed upon His People *Iſrael.* He ſets the peculiar emphaſis upon this, *Pſal.* 147. ult. *He hath not dealt ſo with any Nation.* It is not ſo great a Sin to abuſe the Common goodneſs of God, and yet this is to *treaſure up Wrath, Rom.* 2. 3. 4. Theſe are little and low favours compared with the Goſpel and Covenant, in which eternal Life is exhibited, and therefore whatſoever abuſe God bears withall, this He cannot away with: If it once comes to a deſpiſing and undervaluing, and not improving of ſuch Mercies, then God cannot hold His Peace, but muſt declare His diſpleaſure, *Deut.* 32. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord?*

5. When God purpoſeth to beſtow His everlaſting Mercies upon a People, He ſhews it by enabling of them to keep His Covenant. This is the plaineſt and cleareſt manifeſtation of God's intentions: If He withhold this Grace, the moſt excellent Priviledges of a People are to them Judicial: It was a ſad complaint which *Moſes* made, and it carried in it a very bad Omen to that ſo highly priviledged People of *Iſrael, Deut.* 29. 4. *God hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear unto this day.* And very obſervable is that expreſſion of the Prophet, *Jer.* 31. 31 —— 34. The New-Covenant there mentioned, was not another Covenant for the ſubſtance or matter propounded: It was a Covenant of Reconciliation which was given to *Iſrael* when they came out of *Egypt:* But it was to them only propounded, and outwardly made with them; but they brake it, and thereby provoked God to *ſwear* againſt them *in His Wrath, that they ſhould never enter into His Reſt, Pſalm.* 95. *ult.* But here was an inward and ſpiritual application of the Covenant, a working of the Conditions of it in their hearts, and an eſtabliſh-

ment

ment of their Souls upon it, by vertue of which they were enabled to obſerve His Commandments, and to do them; and thus they were made aſſured Owners of, and Partakers in thoſe everlaſting Mercies therein exhibited. God's treating with Men only in a viſible or outward way, will vindicate His Juſtice, and leave them wholly inexcuſable, when found Deſpiſers; but it is only His gracious application of the Covenant to their Souls by the operation of His Holy Spirit working in them all that which is well-pleaſing in His ſight, that brings ſaving good with it to His People: This is Grace indeed.

6. Hence a true, grounded and permanent Hope muſt be eſtabliſhed by an inward and Self-ſearch. Many are ready to boaſt of the Promiſes, and comfort themſelves with the Promiſes. They hence Carve out for themſelves large Conſolations: But who are they that ſo do? There are ſome to whom God will ſay, Hands off, you have nothing to do with theſe things, The Promiſe indeed is full; everlaſting Mercies, are Soul-ſaving Mercies: But what is all this to you? You will ſay they are free Mercies, and why may not I embrace them as well as another? True; but if God ſhould ask you that queſtion, *Pſal.* 50. 16, 17- *What haſt thou to do to take My Covenant into thy mouth, ſeeing thou hateſt to be reformed?* What anſwer can you make to it? It is a very great piece of folly for a Man to boaſt of a favour, without conſidering of the way of a Conveyance. God ſaith, if you keep His Covenant, He hath endleſs Mercies for you, and they ſhall be yours: Oh yes! ſay you, Give me everlaſting Mercies, I need them, I accept of them: Yes, no doubt, But do you accept of the Covenant? Will you freely cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt by a true and living Faith? Will you depart from Iniquity, and caſt off your Vanities? Will the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous Man

his thoughts? What, do you wince and boggle here? Are these hard sayings which you cannot bare? Let me say then, What have you to do with Mercies? Be not deceived, God is not mocked: If the filthy will be filthy still, if the Proud, Vain, Profane, Leud, &c. will be so still, and hold on those courses, let them not glory in Covenant-Priviledges, and dream of golden Mountains of Mercies: *But the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will shew them His Covenant.*

Collect. 3. It may instruct us in the Nature and quality of the relation wherein Children stand related to the Covenant: This Enquiry and Consideration, both our *Doctrine* and *Text* lead us to: For though I mentioned not Children particularly in the *Doctrine*, yet they are included in the general expression of it, and distinctly mentioned in the *Text*, and God bears a respect to them in the outward dispensation of the Covenant of Reconciliation. There are some that wholly exclude their children from the Covenant, others there are who place too much carnal confidence in their relation to it: And many Children too that Cheat themselves upon this account: It is good therefore that they should know both their Priviledge and their Danger. The *Text* puts Parents and Childrens Children in the same relation, and under the same Conditions.

I shall endeavour to clear up this Collection by opening three propositions.

Prop. 1. That the Children of Beleevers are equally interested in the visible Covenant with their Fathers. By Beleevers I do not only intend those that are such by a true and living Faith, but such also as are so in an open and acknowledged profession of their Faith, these also in the judgement of Charity are to be acknowledged for true Beleevers: And it was to such a

and in ſuch a notion, that the Apoſtles wrote all their Epiſtles to the Churches, as hath been before hinted and proved. By Children alſo I do not mean only the immediate ſeed of ſuch as firſtly acknowledged and profeſſed this Faith, nor doth the Scripture ſo intend, but their poſterity in all Generations. a Hence the *Text* ſaith, Childrens Children: *i. e.* The ſucceeding Generations of them: And ſo was *Abraham*'s Covenant, which in the ſubſtance of it is ours, *viz.* The Covenant of Grace and Reconciliation, ſee, *Gen.* 17. 9, 10. And if any do object that the *Text* ſpeaks of thoſe only that keep Covenant, I anſwer, It is true in reſpect of the Promiſe, but keeping Covenant preſumes being in Covenant. And when I ſay they are equally intereſted, I would be cautiouſly underſtood, I do not therefore mean,

a *Till for Apoſtaſie rejected,*

1. That they are alwayes equally capable of actually enjoying the Priviledges of the Covenant: Divines well diſtinguiſh between *jus ad rem*, and *jus in re*. A Child may have as good a right to his Eſtate when a Child as afterwards; but he cannot take poſſeſſion of it, till he be legally of age: So neither doth their being in Covenant bring them immediately to all the Priviledges, but according to the Rules of the Goſpel. Nor,

2. That they have alwayes an equal inviſible right to the bleſſing of the Covenant: The advantage here is ſecret, and may ſometimes be on the ſide of the Parents, ſometimes on the part of the Child, according to the inward operation of the ſpirit: It is only the viſible Covenant then which theſe ſtand equally related to. Nor,

3. Do I diſpute concerning the Parents conveyance of viſible Priviledges, or how farr they are to ſtand or fall with their Parents, or whither Parents by bringing

themſelves under viſible cenſures, may obſtruct the benefit in regard of their Children, till they do remove theſe obſtructions: Some Divines are of opinion that immediate Parents do equally hold or loſe outward Priviledges for themſelves, and for their Children, whiles in their Loins: But I ſpeak of the Children of viſible Beleevers, ſtanding right when their Children are born: Their equality appears in theſe reſpects.

1. When God extended the Covenant to their Parents, He extended it to them at the ſame time; thongh as to us who are Children of Time, we muſt have an exiſtence before we be actually in Covenant; yet as to God, who dwells in Eternity, He engroſſeth all Generations in one view, and ſo He takes Fathers and Children together: Though the Fathers may be poſſibly conſidered as Agents, and Truſtees for their Children, whiles in their Loins: God did not ſay to *Abraham*, I make a Covenant with thee now, and will make one with thy Children hereafter: But He puts them both together, *Gen.* 17. 7. And hence they are called God's Children, *Ezek.* 23. 37. *Sons whom they bare to me.*.

2. The Covenant comes to each upon equal terms or propoſitions. The Covenant ſtands viſibly under the very ſame reſpects to the Father and to the Child: The *Text* is clear for this, Fathers, and Childrens children if they keep Covenant have a promiſe of Mercy: If they keep it the bleſſing is theirs, if they keep it not they cannot expect it, or challenge it: Thoſe therefore that object from ſuch Scriptures, that the Children are not in Covenant, but only conditionally if they keep it, are to remember, as was hinted before, that keeping of Covenant neceſſarily preſuppoſeth a Covenant to be kept, and the Perſon that ſo keeps it, to be related to it, for none can keep Covenant but one that

is firſt in Covenant, nor yet can any but ſuch break Covenant: He only breakes his Promiſe that firſt made one: He only neglects his duty, that was firſt obliged. It is not the Covenant it ſelf, but the bleſſing of the Covenant, which is the happineſs of thoſe that keep it. We read alſo of thoſe that dealt falſly in the Covenant, *i. e.* promiſed, and ſo were in Covenant, but performed not, *Pſal.* 78. 37. *Jer.* 6. 13.

3. They are equall in that the Father ſhall not ſuffer for the Child, nor the Child for the Father, in caſe of breach of Covenant; but each being actually under it, ſtands perſonally related to it: The Child now born, is to ſtand or fall for himſelf, the Fathers Faith will not ſave the child, nor will his Sin damne him. God took it as a falſe charge, when they counted their miſeries to be for their Fathers Sin, and not their own; and hence uſed that Proverb, *The Fathers have eaten ſower Grapes, and the Childrens teeth are ſet on edge*: and therefore declares againſt it, profeſſing that every one ſhall anſwer for himſelf, ſee, *Ezek.* 18. *Per totum.* Children may by their Sin ripen judgement, which God in patience delayed to execute in their Fathers dayes, and thus He juſtly viſits the Sins of the Fathers upon the children, when they follow the ſame perverſe courſes, and grow worſe in them: But yet in the *C*ovenant every one ſtands upon his own bottom. Children dying in their Infancy are ſaved by a Faith wrought in them perſonally, and not acted by their Parents for them relatively, *Heb.* 10. 38. *The juſt ſhall be ſaved by* [*His*] *Faith.* And yet it is not to be denyed that Parents are inſtruments or *Media* of deriving the viſible *C*ovenant to their children, and may alſo lay in many outward bleſſings for them; *David*'s fidelity was remembred in times of Apoſtaſie many Ages after: As we find in the Hiſtory: Though ſome interpret that of *C*hriſt; which

which is true in the Antitype, yet it respected the Type too: But in these respects God Acts as a Sovereign.

Prop. 2. That there are great visible priviledges which the Children of Beleevers do enjoy by vertue of being related to the Covenant. The objection which the Apostle saw reason to anticipate of old, is much in use now adayes, and may admit the same resolution, *Rom.* 3. begin. *What advantage*, &c? *Much every way.* A great enquiry is made about Priviledges, and many ask of us what do we get by owning and acknowledging of the Covenant; yea, there are many that discourage those who would do it, and tell them it is but a snare: And the truth is, Men may make snares to themselves of the best visible favours of God, and turn that which might be for their advantage to be for their hurt, yet the Covenant it self wraps up a great many Priviledges in it:

To name a few;

1. The ordinary revealed way of dispensing Salvation, being by the visible Covenant; hence they are apparently nearer Salvation than others. What God doth in a secret way by Sovereign prerogative is not our business to enquire, *Deut.* 29.29. But according to what is revealed in the Scriptures, the way to Life, is by the Gospel and dispensation of it, and visible acceptance of, and submition to it: Not that it is in it self saving, yet it is the outward way of Gods appointment. Hence, that, *Rom.* 10. 14. God may save those that are at present out of visible Covenant, but then He brings them under the bond of it; now, in as much as these in question are already under it, this is their great advantage.

2. By vertue of the Covenant they are priviledged, with Gospel-Ordinances, which are the means of Salvation.

vation. Ordinances are viſible *Covenant*-Priviledges, and they are for the bringing the Elect home unto Glory, *Eph.* 4. 10, 11, 12.

Object. But this is no Covenant-Priviledge, for the heathen have this Liberty, we keep them not away from coming to the Ordinances.

Anſw. From the Word Preached we exclude none, any may come that will.

But ſtill,

1. There are no other Ordinances which we admit them to, till they do embrace the *Covenant*, and that by a viſible profeſſion of Faith and Repentance; and ſo they ſubject themſelves to the *Covenant* of God, we Baptize them not, we admit them not to the Lord's Table, exerciſe not *Church* watch cover, or diſcipline to them till then: So that the *Covenant* is unto them a neceſſary Medium of Perticipation, there muſt be a viſible converſion wrought in them, from the heathen to the *Chriſtian* Religion.

2. Though the Word may be preached to the Heathen, yet it is committed to the *Church* or *Covenant* People of God, *Rom.* 3. 2. It is a depoſitum that God put into their hands, a gift of God's favour which He hath given His *Church* poſſeſſion of.

Queſt. *But it may then be demanded, why then do you not admit all the Children of Beleevers to all the Ordinances? If they be theirs, wrong is done them by debarring them of their right.*

Anſw. That any of the *Children* of the *Covenant*, being adult, do not enjoy all the Ordinances, is their own fault in a great meaſure: The Door of the Houſe of God ſtands open unto them, and if they are willing to come in to it, and are regularly fit for it, there is no reaſon they ſhould be prohibited; nay, all encouragement

ment is, or ought to be ſet before them, that they may, according to our Saviours manner of expreſſion, be compelled to come in, *i. e.* By the force of argument and perſwaſion. Thus we ſee it is a great priviledge to have a Title to the Ordinances, for all that is needful to eternal Salvation, as to means, is therein afforded them. The Word Preached is a perfect Rule, able to make the Man of God ſo, *2 Tim.* 3. 16, 17. The Sacraments adminiſtred have abundance of grace in them, and afford great relief and ſtrength to the Soules of thoſe who know how to make uſe of them. The *C*hurch cenſures are Medicinal, and appointed by God. For healing and not for deſtruction.

3. By vertue of the *C*ovenant they are priviledged with much more of the preſence and ſtriving of the Spirit of God than others ordinarily enjoy. The Spirit ſpeaks directly to the Churches; He walks in the midſt of the Golden Candleſticks. Church Officers are Stars in Chriſt's own right Hand; and *where God hath Recorded His Name, He hath engaged His Preſence, Exod.* 20. 24. He ſpeaks more darkly, obſcurely, weakly to Heathen by the light of their natural conſciences, then He doth to thoſe who ſit under the Word and Means; the Word being the Chariot in which He chuſeth to Ride moſt eminently, and with which He inſinuates Himſelf into the Souls of His People. Theſe to be ſure ſhall have the firſt profers of Salvation made to them, *Act.* 13. 46. And if they embrace and accept them to be theirs, herein they greatly pleaſe God. In a Word, they are advantaged to have as much done with them for their good as can be, as to Meanes: the care, the coſt, the pains of the Husband-Man, is is not laid out upon the open Forreſt or wild Wilderneſs, but upon His Vineyard, *Iſa.* 5. begin.

Prop. 3. That the Children of the *C*ovenant ſtand in a very difficult and hazardous relation. Many are prone

prone to be proud of their priviledges, and ſay, *The Temple of the Lord are Theſe*: They boaſt themſelves and are confident in their Church relations; but how few are there that do ſolemnly conſider their dangers? As it is a precious, ſo it is a very awfull thing to be in viſible Covenant with God: The name of Covenant relation, *viz.* The *Lord our God is a great and dreadfull Name*, *Deut.* 28. 58. There are none upon the face of the earth that ſtand upon more dangerous Precipices then the Children of the Covenant: The truth of this aſſertion may be made clear, if we conſider theſe few things.

I. That viſible-Covenant-intereſt will not afford Man ſufficient ſecurity againſt eternal Damnation. Many there are who fondly think the Covenant ſhall ſave them, but they do but put a *C*heat upon their own Souls. Keeping of Covenant will ſave a man, according to God's promiſe who will be true to his Word; but barely being outwardly in Covenant will not do it. The Covenant indeed hath ſaving Mercies in it, but they are exhibited or propounded to us with an *IF*; if you keep it. There are many are admitted to tread in the Holy Place, who ſhall never be entertained in the moſt Holy. If ſome Men ſhall be ſo bold as to plead the Covenant with *C*hriſt at the laſt day, he will counterplead them; yea, and condemn them by the ſame *C*ovenant, by which they think to be ſaved, becauſe it will be found that they did not keep it. This poſition is ſo notoriouſly true, that there are manifold examples of thoſe who have not only forfeited the viſible Priviledges of it, but alſo have fallen from it into the depth of Hell. What got *Iſhmael* by being a child of the *C*hurch, and circumciſed, when he turned a mocker, but rejection from the *C*hurch, and excluſion out of Heaven? What got *Eſau* when he became profane? or *Abſalom* when he proved a Rebel? If Children

grow

grow Looſe, Light, Vaine, wicked, &c. There is no hiding of themſelves in the Church, or under the Covenant from the wrath of God. *He will ſearch* Jeruſalem *with Candles*, and His wrath find out all thoſe who ſay in their hearts, God ſeeth us not, *Zeph.* 1. 12. When dying *David* takes upon him to inſtruct his Son *Solomon* about the Covenant, he opens the Nature and Hazards of it, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *If thou ſeek Him, He will be found of thee, but if thou forſake Him, He will caſt thee off for ever.* A noble Vine may degenerate, and the Children of Godly Parents may prove Apoſtates; and if they do, *What can be expected but Deſtruction?* A Man muſt be ſomething more than outwardly a *Jew*, or Church-member, or Child of the Covenant, elſe this will deceive him, and give him no ſure Title to Heaven and Glory.

2. That Godly Parents cannot by their Faith, nor all endeavours, work, no not ſo much as ſecure the Regeneration and Salvation of their Children. It hath been a queſtion moved by ſome, whither godly Parents doing their duty to their children faithfully, and uſing their outmoſt endeavours in bringing them up for God, may not rely on the Covenant-promiſe, and poſitively believe their Children ſhall be ſaved, and that although for the preſent they ſee no change wrought in them, but they walk in vain courſes? In anſwer to which I ſhall propound a few things to be conſidered.

1. That the Soveraignty of Divine Grace, which can neither be prevened nor obliged by any thing in or for us, is a Pillar-truth of Chriſtian Religion, *Rom.* 9. 16. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, &c.* So far as we detract from God's Soveraignty in the diſpenſation of converting and ſaving Grace, we ſo far make God a debtor to the Creature, before he makes Himſelf ſo by a free Promiſe.

2. That all which Parents can do for their Children, in

in attendance to the Precept, *viz.* In bringing them up for God, inſtructing them in His knowledge and fear, exerciſing their Authority in keeping them in from leud courſes, and cauſing them to ſerve God in a viſible attendance on the means of Grace, &c. It is no more then their duty, and is in no wayes to be counted meritorious, *Luk.* 17. 10. Hence, for their own Souls ſafety they muſt do it, except they will hazard the diſpleaſure of God.

3. That it out-does the power of Moral-means and endeavours, though never ſo ſincerely uſed, to Plant or infuſe Grace into any Souls: The Work of Converſion is not wrought *by the will of Man, but of God* only, *Joh.* 1.13. If good Men could Will, could Pray, could Labour Faith into any according to their deſire, their would none of their Children, none of their Servants, none of their Neighbours, none in the World periſh.

4. That Divine Faith is not only a confidence, but a grounded confidence: The Rule doth not only command and bind us to believe, but it alſo tells us what we are to believe: The Hold of Faith is the Promiſe, and therefore it can be aſſured of any thing no further then that goes: Faith muſt have a clear Word for its Truſt, elſe it is but vain: All our Plea is in the Covenant-Promiſe, and if we cannot find that we look for [There] we have nothing to build upon, but are at uncertainty.

5. That Beleevers have no abſolute and illimited Promiſe in the Word of God that all their Children, or this or that Child ſhall be ſaved, no nor limited neither to their care, and faithfulneſs, that if they do their beſt, He will infallibly add ſaving Grace: This willappear by two Arguments.

1. Becauſe God is faithfull to every Promiſe which He hath made, He is a God that cannot lie, or repent. I know godly Parents may be remiſs, but they are not

always

alwayes ſo, and yet have had their Children whom God hath rejected: *Abraham* his *Iſhmael*: *Iſaack* his *Eſau*: *David* his *Abſolem* and *Adonijah*: *Eli* his *Hophni* and *Phinehas*: Now of *Abraham* we read that he was Truſty and Faithfull in teaching his children, *Gen.* 18. 19. And therefore he inſtructed, and diſciplined: *Iſhmael* he circumciſed him, and prayed earneſtly for him.

2. Becauſe the faithfull People of God have themſelves thus interpreted the Promiſe, they judged it to be upon Suppoſition, & to carry a Condition in it: Eminent for this is the forementioned inſtance of *David*: that he thus underſtood it is evident, not only by that forecited warning which He gave to *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. But alſo by that knowledgment which he makes of it to God Himſelf, *Pſal.* 132. 11, 12.

Object. But we ſhall find that God makes an abſolute Promiſe to *David* that He will eſtabliſh His Covenant with His ſeed, and not Violate it, *Pſal.* 89. 28, 29.

Anſ. It is to be obſerved that in that place *David* repreſents or typifyes Chriſt the Head of the Church, and by His Children we are to underſtand only thoſe that are given to Chriſt of God in the Covenant of Redemption, concerning whom it is certain they ſhall obtain Salvation; for as the Apoſtle ſaith, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *The foundation of God ſtandeth ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knoweth who are His.* But a Man may be a ſubject of the viſible Covenant, who hath no right to the Covenant of Redemption.

Que. *But you will ſay then, What encouragement is there for Parents to Pray for, to inſtruct and take pains with their Children, and give them up to God in the Covenant, if they cannot do all this in Faith?* What is not of Faith is of Sin.

Anſ. There are other wayes for Faith to act us in our Duty, beſides this particular confident perſwaſion of

this

this fruit and effect. Conſider then,

1. That Faith is to eye the Precept as well as the Promiſe: Faith is to influence our duty as well as our aſſurance. Faith is the principle of our obedience: And if we believe this is our duty, to perform, becauſe God commands it, and are hereby animated to our duty, this is Obedience of Faith: it is our duty to *ſow our Seed in the Morning, &c.* Although we know not which ſhall proſper this or that: becauſe Faith workes by Love.

2. That a Beleever is to be engaged to his duty, not only by a promiſe, but alſo by the precept; it is true the promiſe is our Encouragement, but the precept is our Rule; in ſubmiſſion to the command therefore he is to go about his Work, and to leave the ſucceſs of it to Divine diſpoſe, and ſo doing he performes his duty in Faith: and he that is not acted by this principle, but doth all meerly as he thinks it may ſucceed, is truly mercenary.

3. There are other Promiſes which may encourage a Beleever in this duty, *viz.* That if he doth it in Truth and ſincerity it ſhall be accepted and rewarded by God. God will ſome way or other make him to find that his labour hath not been in vain. The Husband-man is in duty to ſow his Seed in Faith; but he is not ſure he ſhall have a good Crop. The Fig-tree may not bloſſom, though he manures it with care, but this is his encouragement, that in a way of doing duty, God hath ſaid that He will bleſs him.

4. Faith alſo teacheth us that attending the means is neater to the particular bleſſing, than not attending but neglecting them. God oftner meets His people in the way of his ordinary, then in the way of His extraordinary providence: nor doth God alwayes, though He may ſometimes in Soveraignty deny the deſired Bleſſing to His people; yea, and although He may

ſome-

ſometimes worke there where we are guilty of ſhameful neglect, as in Converting *Joſiah*, the ſon of a wicked *Amon*, yet our neglect is inexcuſable, becauſe we have deſpiſed the Command. Such a Parent as hath faithfully done his duty, may die in Hope, that although he ſee not the deſired Fruit of his Pains and prayers yet they may appear when his head is laid in the duſt: To be ſure he may with this comfort leave the World, that he hath been faithfull in his place.

3. The provocations of Covenant-Children are moſt hainous, and conſequently moſt provoking to God. The Sins of none are ſo offenſive in His ſight as theirs: You ſhall find therefore that the Scripture ſets a Note obſervable upon this conſideration, *Amos.* 3. 2. ſo, *Deut.* 32. 19, The provokings of Sons and Daughters are bitter, *Jer.* 5. 7. *Thy Children have forſaken me, How ſhall I pardon thee for this?* God hath taken ſuch as theſe very near to Him, He hath given them ſuch priviledges, and ſo many advantages: Hence, for a child of the Covenant, to live like the Children of heathen, and thoſe whom God hath not known, this is a Sin of a deep Dye; yea, far deeper than theirs who only abuſe the light of nature, and common goodneſs of God: If you read, *Ezek.* 16. *per totum*, You ſhall there ſee what a courſe God takes to make *Jeruſalems* Sin to appear unparrellel'd, *viz.* By declaring what Covenant priviledges, and favours they had enjoyed, and prophanely abuſed: Verily, God can endure to ſee that in *Sodom*, which He cannot bear to ſee in *Zion.*

4. Hence to periſh from under the Covenant will be a moſt aſtoniſhing perdition. If *Judah* provoke God to deſtroy her, *She comes down wonderfully*, even to the aſtoniſhment of all her Neighbours: Let me tell you, there are none that leave the World with ſuch amazing Fears and Terrors that cloſe their Lives with ſuch

such dreadfull agonies and horrours, as such do, who have been related to the Covenant, and enjoyed the priviledges of it, and slighted them: The remembrance of their Church state, their Baptisme, the Ordinances they have sat under, the Threatnings, Warnings, Counsels, and Encouragements of the Covenant, which they have despised, will fill their Consciences with most dreadfull regrets and reflections. and if any have been so seared, as to stifle and suppress all these remorces, and to depart this Life under a sullen and desperate hardness, or a self-cheating hope; yet, in the great Day, when the Righteous Judge shall give to every one according to their deeds, then woe, and ten thousand woes to those Children of the Church that shall have despised their priviledges, and slighted the Grace profered in the *C*ovenant; that have sold themselves to profaneness, or liv'd in desperate hypocrisie, that have forgotten their *C*ovenant-engagements to God, and brought themselves under the *C*urses of that Covenant. Thus you see the relation of Children to the Covenant, what are their Priviledges, and what are their Dangers: God of His mercy grant both to Parents and Children Grace and Wisdom to make a right improvement of these solemne Considerations.

USE II.

For Exhortation to all such as stand related to God in the Covenant, to be very carefull and watchfull to your selves that you keep it. You are not so much to boast of, or confide in your Covenant Relation, as to see to your own part and duty in which you are nextly concerned: Take these things for Motive.

1. It is no little or light matter to keep Covenant

with God. It is true, Evangelical duty is easie, if it be compared with those rigid and strict, yea impossible to be performed demands of the Covenant of Works: Impossible, I mean by the Children of fallen *Adam.* God gives acceptance to such weak Duties, and withall gives strength to do them. But still, if we consider what it is that is required in the Covenant of Grace, we shall find that it is for Matter very large, and for difficulty, exceeding all our own power in our selves, and cannot be performed without special Grace from Jesus Christ. There is a great deale comprehended in those two short Words, *Believe* and *Obey.* Perseverance in the Faith, maintaining it against all the shocks of Temptation which assaults it: And constancy in Obedience, continuing faithfull unto Death, waiting till afterwards for our reward; these are great Works. To do all we do for God, as being His Servants, to devote all our time to Jesus Christ, as those who are Bought with a Price, requires, Care, Diligence, Vigilance. Agen, there are a great many Duties laid upon us in the Covenant, the Precept is of great latitude, *Psal.* 119 96. Every Command is full. There are Duties to be done, Sins to be avoided, there are Afflictions & Tryals to be undergone: God is to be believed in, and worshipped: Our Neighbours are to be honoured and loved: There are a great many relations which a Christian stands in, and every one hath its particular respective Duties. Moreover the whole Man, and all in it stands engaged in these Covenant Duties: Every faculty and member owes Obedience to the Will of God. We have our hearts to look after, and keep with diligence for God and His Glory, *Prov.* 4.23. Our tongue to order and keep within bounds, which must be well looked after, *Psal.* 39. 1. And all our bodily actions must be conformed to Divine prescripts: All our Natural, Civil, and Religious acti-

ons

ons muſt be ſquared by the right Rule, and directed to their proper End, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. Finally, that which makes it ſo great a Work to keep *C*ovenant, is the weakneſs of our Grace, and ſtrength of our Corruption, and force of the Temptation we are expoſed to: We have every one of us a Traitor in our Boſome, beſides a ſollicitous and diligent Enemy waiting all opportunities to tempt and draw us aſide: And there muſt be great vigilancy and reſolution to reſiſt a ſubtile Devil holding correſpondence with a treacherous heart: Put all theſe things together, and they will ſpeak thus much, that it is a very great Work for a Chriſtian to keep Covenant with God.

2. It is not a thing indifferent whither you keep Covenant or no. If you would enjoy the comfort of the Promiſe, you muſt have the witneſs of your own conſciences unto this. It is one thing to be in viſible *C*ovenant, and another to have the promiſe of the Covenant poſitively engaged to you. Men deceive themſelves greatly with this opinion, that they think, if they are in Covenant, they have Chriſt for their Surety and *U*ndertaker: And hence can maintain ſtrong confidence in the midſt of their own careleſs and carnal neglects; abuſing and perverting many Scriptures, and particularly, that, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. *If we ſin, we have an Advocate*: They promiſe themſelves that Chriſt ſhall anſwer for all their breaches of Covenant, and hereupon it is no great matter with them to neglect Duty, and live careleſly and irregularly: but we muſt beware of deceiving our ſelves, for *God* will not be mocked, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 7 Conſider then,

1. We may be in viſible Covenant, and yet not have Chriſt for our engaged *U*ndertaker, it is only Beleevers that have truly placed their ſouls truſt in Him, that He ſtands engaged to and for; to others He is only propounded. All in the viſible Church have not ſaving

Faith wrought in them, they have not cordially cloſed with Chriſt as their Prophet, Prieſt and King, though they have outwardly and verbally promiſed ſo to do; and His Mediation and Redemption will not be profitable to ſuch: Theſe have Pardon, Peace and Salvation promiſed to them only with this proviſo, if they believe, and that with ſuch a caveat annexed to it too, that if they believe not they ſhall be damned. God indeed beſtowes upon them all viſible means and helps to believing, but if they improve them not unto the attaining of this Grace, they will be witneſſes againſt them in the Day of account, and help greatly to enflame their Reckoning, *Mat.* 11. 23.

2. Chriſt ſtands Surety for Beleevers, not to encourage their neglect; but only to help their Faith, relying upon Him in ſenſe of ſelf-inſufficiencie: and that too, either whiles they are ſtriving to do good, and cannot do the good which they would, or at leaſt are mourning for and repenting of their falls and neglects. Chriſt never intended that His Grace ſhould be the Abettour and Protector of Men's Wickedneſs: And ſo to improve it, is to turn it into wantonneſs, which every ſerious Soul muſt abominate, *Rom.* 6. 1,2. And hence alſo, though Chriſt will be an effectual Advocate for every [True] Beleever, Notwithſtanding all his frailties and breaches of Covenant with God, yet He will be no Abettour of him for his wilfull and bold tranſgreſſions committed upon preſumption of Chriſt's Interceſſion, but he will charge his ſin home upon him, as he did upon *David*, and make it an evil and bitter thing to him; He will break his bones, wound his ſpirit, make him ſee the evil, and feel the ſmart of it, ſo as to loath himſelf for it: In a Word, he will not apply his pardon ſenſibly to the Soul, but in a way of deep humiliation, godly Sorrow and Repentance.

3. Degeneracy, Apoſtaſie, and Covenant breaking

is

is an evil into which God's viſible *C*ovenant-People are very apt to decline. It is as it were the hereditary diſeaſe of the viſible *C*hurch. It is a Malady Epidemical they very often fall into it. It hath been ſo from the beginning, beſides the particular diſcovery of falſe Profeſſors, in the beſt Times and Ages, and Churches, it is alſo obſervable, that there can ſcarcely any Authority be produced, that ever the Church preſerved a general integrity in Faith and Manners, above an Age at once at the moſt. Yea, we find that *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, though under many peculiar advantages to keep cloſe with God, who was ſo near them, ſo ready to help them, ſo wonderfully diſcovered Himſelf to them, did yet fall into univerſal Idolatry before *Joſhua*, and the Elders which out-lived him were cold in their graves: that people that had juſt before *Joſhua*'s death, ſolemnly renewed Covenant, went after ſtrange Gods: Religion ſcarcely well ſetled in *David*'s time, yet waines before *Solomon*'s death; and ſoon after ten tribes go away to direct idolatry, and the two that remained but little better. *Joſiah*'s reformation was buried with him in one Grave. Since Chriſt came in the fleſh, the Apoſtles had ſcarce ſetled the Chriſtian Churches, but they lived (ſome of them) to ſee the myſtery of iniquity begin to worke: *John* who was the longeſt lived, of the Apoſtles, ſaw five of the ſeven Churches of *Aſia* manifeſtly degenerating. Now the conſideration of theſe things ſhould put an awe upon our ſpirits, and make us the more watchfull, remembring that we have no more ſecurity for our ſtanding than they had,: It is the concluding argument which the Apoſtle drawes from ſuch premiſes, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12. *Let him that thinks he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.* They ſtood upon the ſame ground that we do, neither have we any greater ſecurity of our ſtanding, then they had of theirs.

4. Conſider how great the ſeverity of God hath

been againſt Covenant-breakers. *Joſhua* diſſembled not with them, but gave them a true caution, *Joſh.* 24. 19, 20. *He will not forgive, &c. If you forſake, &c.* God ſends the *Jews* to *Shilo*, to read there in thoſe heaps and monuments of His anger, a Leſſon of their own admonition, *Jer.* 7. 11. The Hiſtories of God's revenge upon His own People, for affronts offered to His Covenant, are as well recorded for our inſtruction, as thoſe of His Mercies. God would have all of us to know, that He is Holy as well as Gracious, and that He expects to be glorified by all thoſe that draw near unto Him. If *Aaron*'s Sons offer ſtrange fire, they themſelves ſhall be deſtroyed with fire from Heaven. Awfull is that Scripture, *Jer.* 12. 7. *I have forſaken my Houſe: I have left mine heritage, I have given the dearly Beloved of my Soul into the hand of her Enemyes.* *Jeruſalem* came down wonderfully, becauſe ſhe had forſaken her God. Apoſtate Churches are the moſt unſafe, and inſecure of any People of the World, and let us remember that the time is drawing on when Judgement muſt begin at the Houſe of God, and if ſo, we have great need, if we would then eſcape, to ſee to our own hearts and lives, that they be agreeable to what the Covenant expects of us.

5. Conſider, there is Grace, Peace and ſafety to be had in our keeping Covenant with God, it is *David*'s profeſſion, 119. 165. *Great Peace have all they that keep thy Law.* There is no danger on God's part, that He ſhould fail of His Promiſe, it is part of His Name, and one of His precious Titles that He is a God, keeping Covenant, His Truth and Faithfulneſs engage Him in it, we have to do with a God that cannot lie; He *never ſaid to the houſe of Iſrael, Seek my Face in vain.* As Covenant-Mercyes are everlaſting, ſo they are ſure; they are inviolably engaged to them that fear him, and keep His Covenant, called, *Sure Mercyes of* David, *Iſa.* 55. 3.

55. 3. As long as *Uzziah* walked with God, He cauſed him to proſper: As far as God ſees fit for His own Glory, Upright Churches ſhall have outward Peace and proſperity: Or if, for His Glory, he ſuffers perſecution to come upon them to try their graces, they ſhall need to fear none of theſe things, *Rev.* 2. 10. And it will be a bleſſed and ſoul-ſatisfying concluſion, to be able to profeſs in times of greateſt oppreſſion, as they did, *Pſal.* 44. 17. &c. If a Church, as ſuch, Apoſtatize; yet faithfull Ones and mourners in it ſhall be Marked out for Mercy, *Ezek.* 9. begin. Thoſe who then defile not their Garments, *Shall walk with Him in White*, *Rev.* 3. 4. If God comes forth in His Indignation, and puniſheth the Inhabitants of the Earth, yet ſtill He will provide for them; call for them into their Chambers, and ſhut the Door upon them for their ſecurity. And then ſhall the Faithful know that it was not in vain for them that they ſerved God, and were not falſe to His Covenant, but ſtood firm againſt all ſhocks of Temptation, though in the mean time, for a while, they may be ſcorned and ſcoffed at by the World for their integrity.

In the further Proſecution of this *Uſe*, I ſhall firſt propound ſome general helps, and then preſent more particular Directions.

For help, would we keep Covenant with God, Then,

1. You muſt go to and believe in Jeſus Chriſt for Grace whereby you may be enabled ſo to do. I name this firſt, Becauſe it is the foundation of all: Chriſt is the Surety and Undertaker in the Covenant on both Parties, and if you would do any thing in this buſineſs, you muſt go to Him that He may worke your Workes in and for you, the Life of a Chriſtian, is a Life of Faith, *Heb.* 10. 38.

Conſider

Consider therefore,

1 As long as you remain in unbelief, you are on that very account, Covenant-breakers; for it is the first thing required in the Covenant, *viz.* that we believe. It binds and obligeth us to go to Christ, and make an absolute choise of Him, and place the Hope and Trust of our Souls upon Him: Think of this, you that live & ly in a State of Unregeneracy; you break your bond as long as you thus live, and are not therefore under the Promise, but the threatning at the present: When you shall be put upon tryal, whether you have kept Covenant with God, the first question will be, whither you have believed; and if this cannot be made good, there needs no more enquiry to be made, but the Case is cast against you, all the pleas you can possibly make from your Moral Obedience, or Legal Workes done by you will not in the least salve it, but you will be found among, and pronounced to be workers of iniquity.

2. Without this Faith we cannot perform Gospel-Obedience, which is also required of us. As it is the first thing called for on our Part, so it is the root and Principle of all the rest, without which no service can be received. To acceptable Obedience, Three things are required.

1. That the Person doing it be accepted in Christ.

2. That it be performed by strength derived from Christ.

3. That it come to God through His hands. Now to each of these Faith thus embracing of Christ is requisite: Hence, without it no pleasing God, *Heb.* 11. 6.

III. Though we cannot go savingly to Christ before

fore Faith be wrought in us, becauſe Faith is the firſt ſaving Grace; yet it is our duty to be diligently uſing all thoſe means which are appointed to this End, and therein to be waiting upon Him for it. Senſe therefore of our own inability, and utter inſufficiency to do this Work, in and of our ſelves, is not a juſt ground of diſcouragement, but may be improved to excite and direct us to go there where ſufficiency is to be had; Chriſt therefore ſends His gracious invitations to ſuch as theſe, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Mat.* 11. 28.

4. Thoſe that have believed are to exerciſe Faith daily, going to Chriſt for renewed Grace and ſtrength, Faith is the great help, and the only help we have in us, to fetch in that ſtrength, by which alone we can do that which is well-pleaſing unto God. It is not for a Beleever to ſay, I am weak, and dare not ſtir; leſt I fall: No, but he is to ſay, Chriſt is ſtrong, and He hath bid me to wait on Him, and believe in Him. This I may aſſure you of; That when a *C*hild of God, in tender ſenſe of his own inability to do his duty as he ſhould, hath believingly caſt it upon and committed it to *C*hriſt, the bigger & better part of his duty is done, and he may chearfully and ſtedfaſtly go through the reſt. Let none hope or think to keep Covenant in his own ſtrength; nor let any deſpair of it, as long as there is ſtrength in Chriſt; eſpecially conſidering, that, if we believe in Him, He ſtands Surety for us, and is in the Covenant; not only our *High-Prieſt* to make ſatisfaction for us to his Father, but our King too, to Rule in us, and lead us in His fear, and not to ſuffer us to depart from Him all the dayes of our Lives. When we (finding our ſelves to be of no Strength) go to, and Lean upon Jeſus Chriſt, we are carried forth happily, and ſhall ſerve God acceptably: It is then alone when we are too preſumptous of our own ſtrength, and rely on that,

that

that we fail, and dishonour the Name of God by breaking His *C*ovenant.

2. Labour to get a good understanding of, and acquaintance with the Nature, Tenor and Extent of your *C*ovenant-Duty, and keep it upon your thoughts. Many are very forward, and critically inquisitive after the Nature of Covenant-Priviledges: And indeed it is one great Study and discourse of the Times: But that which is for our Practice, or in which we ought to be most of all conversant; we are prone to be most backward in, *viz.* Our duty; whereas it ought to be the Servants constant Care, to know his Lord's Will, How else should he do it? God affords us many means of knowledge, our Ignorance therefore (if we are guilty of it) will not be any part of an excusing Plea for us. Ignorance of Duty under means of Knowledge, will not be acknowledged for Ignorance, nor procure us any fewer stripes. What Men are wilfully or unnecessarily ignorant of Through their own heedlesness, will be charged, not as Ignorance, but contempt: Neither can we do acceptably, except we know. Let us therefore be industrous to get a right understanding of the Will of God, and what are the Rules of Faith and Practice, that so we may be furnished for every good Work. The Lord expects more in these Dayes and Places of Gospel-Light, than where it is wanting. The Duties of Christians are many, and their *C*alls to Duty are diversly circumstanced: Now God affords you many, both publick and private helpes; be not you negligent in using of them. *David*, by frequent Meditations attained to a large knowledge of *G*od's Precepts, *Psal.* 119. 99. And if we could ponder upon these things as much, and with as much intenseness of mind, as we are wont to do upon our Worldly Concernes, we should in time grow good proficients in them.

3. Get

3. Get a Love to, and delight in the wayes of God. There is no ſuch help to a chearfull and conſtant keeping of Covenant as a heart taken with and delighted in the Command. Fear of Wrath may do ſomething to reſtrain the outward Man from many groſs Enormities, which otherwayes ſinfull Men would boldly and unreclaimably run into: And hope of reward may put Men upon it to do many things, which otherwiſe they would not be ſo forward to engage in: And it is certain, that both fear and hope acting in their due Places, and managed by an higher principle, are of no little uſe to a Child of God, whom his heavenly Father is pleaſed to train up (in a great meaſure) by threatnings and promiſes. But ſtill there is nothing of ſuch efficacy as Love: Fear and hope invite us to cloſe with the Command for our *Own* ſake, but Love allures us to embrace it for *Its* ſake, for the preciouſneſs of it. Love conſtrains: It is a forcible and irreſiſtible *Impetus* by which it carries us to our duty: Many waters cannot quench it: perſecutions cannot obſtruct, proſperity cannot inveigle it: It makes the Command precious above all things: Gold, and fine Gold are not comparable to it, &c. *Pſal.* 19. 9, 10. Now there is very much argument and reaſon to make us in Love with Covenant-duties: They are the revealed will of *God*, and if we love Him, we cannot but be in love with them. They are the product of infinite Wiſdom, ſuted properly to the condition of Man, and therefore moſt deſirable: They are the great things of the Law, and hence deſerve greateſt eſteem. Every Rule of Duty is a Rule of Life, and therefore ought to be as dear unto us as our own lives. It is not at all to be queſtioned, but that the cauſe of the great neglect of duty among Profeſſors, and their remiſſeneſs in doing what the Covenant requires, and the hard coming off of many duties which croſs fleſh and blood, ariſeth

seth from the want of such a measure of love as ought to be.

4. Carefully avoid the throwing of your selves upon unnecessary Temptations to break Covenant with God. There are enough will come unsent for, and ever when the People of God do go about to set themselves in a most solemn manner to engage in the service of God, Satan is then watching for an opportunity to give them a furious assault. God no sooner gives *Adam* the Covenant but the Serpent forthwith assaults him. We had need to keep as much as possibly we can out of the way. Unnecessary compliance with wicked men carries great temptation in it; *Can one touch Pitch and not be defiled*: *Solomon* was drawn away by his strange wives; his wisdome (though uncomparable) was befooled and the great familiarity which God held with him (who had appeared twice to him) was forgotten. *Jehoshaphat* laid a snare for himself, and for his Kingdome, by making affinity, and entering into a league offensive and defensive with the house of *Ahab*, and it proved pernicious in the event. If Men will stand in the way of sinners, it may be in a little while we shall find them sitting in the seat of the scornefull. The People of God should be acquainted with their own infectious hearts, and know how apt and ready they are to be born down by the body of death it self, much more when weights of temptation are hung upon it, else they are not like to be true to God, or faithfull in His Covenant. They that unnecessarily frequent publick houses, will in time learn to to be drunkards. They that make a trade of keeping vain Company will grow themselves vain persons: They that frequently converse with Hereticks, and like society with them, will at least become favourers of their Heresies. The counsel of the Apostle was very seasonable and needfull for a People in Covenant with

God

God, to follow, if ever they intend to be true to it, 2 *Cor.* 6. 14. &c. *Be not unequally yoaked together with unbeleevers*, &c. Nor let us promiſe our ſelves that God will keep us, if we watch not over our ſelves. He that walks circumſpectly only walks ſafely. Men may think their hearts Temptation-proof; but if they will run the hazard in this confidence, they are like to come off as *Peter* did in the *High-Prieſt*'s Hall. As then you would have God hear when you pray, *Lead us not into Temptation*, do not throw your ſelves into it.

5. Maintain and daily keep in exerciſe the work of Repentance. Though I know it is dangerous and preſumptuous for Men to adventure to Sin, upon hope to make all good agen by Repentance (as though a Man ſhould boldly and frequently take poyſon, becauſe he hath a precious Antidote by him) and indeed ſuch a frame of ſpirit cannot reign, and rule in a Beleever, to whom Sin it ſelf is in its own nature abominable, yet ſuch is the ſtate of fallen Man (though converted) that except they keep the grace of Repentance in continual exerciſe, they cannot keep Covenant with God. There is no living a life of Goſpel obedience without it. The ſtate of Beleevers in this life is a very imperfect ſtate, in regard of Sanctification, it being but in part or degree, not perfect. there is in a Child of God a great deal of fooliſhneſs, by reaſon of which he often miſſeth his way, and wandreth from the precept: much weakneſs which makes him to fall ſeven times: he ſtumbles at a ſmall thing that lyes in his way: Every difficulty is ready to be an obſtacle unto him: Much alſo of rebellion is in his heart, by reaſon of that Law which is in his members, which frequently leads him Captive. Hence the wiſe Man makes that peremptory demand, *Who can ſay, I have made my heart clean*, *Pro.* 20. 9. His errours and wandrings are ſo many

that

that [alas!] he cannot know them, *Pſal.* 19. 12. Hence hath God in much mercy, accommodated the Covenant of Grace to this imperfect ſtate of His own People, ſo that a principal part of our keeping Covenant with God, lyes in our upholding of the conſtant exerciſe of true Repentance. And God in His gracious condeſcendency is pleaſed to acknowledge the penitent (though imperfect) Beleever to be a Covenant keeper, and though we ought not thereupon to be bold to ſin, yet if at any time, through our own frailty, and the ſubtilty of our own deceitful hearts, we are overtaken, He hath provided Chriſt to be an Advocate for us, 1 *Joh.* 2. 1. Hence, we find the Goſpel-precepts are ſummarily comprehended in thoſe two words, *Repent* and *Believe*, *Mark*, 1. 15. And God hath abundantly promiſed in His word, that if His People do at any time repent of, and heartily acknowledge and turn from their ſinful faults, He will *Hear* in Heaven, and *Pardon*, and their Sins ſhall be in His account, as if they had never been committed. Now, to the end, that you may order your Repentance aright, take theſe few Rules.

1. Labour to uphold and ſtrengthen in your hearts a true and genuine hatred of all Sin: This is the great Principle on which true Repentance acts. Our commiſſion of Sin ariſeth from our Love and liking of it on our corrupt part: Now Repentance acts in a direct contrariety unto this, and hence it proceeds from hatred of Sin. Repentance is properly a change of the minde and affection. All Self-Juſtification ariſeth from the Complacency which Men have in their ſinful wayes; hence ariſe excuſes, and diminutive extenuations: And we are not ſo much afraid of Sin, as of the wrath and puniſhment which attends it: Whereas, if Sin were in it ſelf hatefull to us, we ſhould both avoid

it

it with all care as a Man would the biting of a Serpent; and alſo when at any time we are overtaken, we would loath our ſelves for it: Let Sin then be exceeding ſinful in your eſteem, grow more and more out of love with, get therefore more acquainted with the odious nature of it: See how contrary to God's holineſs it is, how impure, and what defilement it pollutes the Soul withal.

2. Dwell much and frequently upon the Work of Self-examination: We are very apt to be curious Criticks upon other Mens actions, but very ſuperficial in calling our ſelves to a through accouut: Hence, ſo little practical Repentance, becauſe we know ſo little that we have to repent of; and the reaſon is, becauſe we are ſuch ſtrangers at home. Would you not count him but an ill husband, who can give a better account of his neighbours trading than of his own? Such are theſe who can make a better deſcription of others lives and wayes than their own. If the wiſe Man commends it as a point of prudence to know the ſtate of our *Flocks* and *Herds*, how far greater then is it to acquaint our ſelves with the ſtate of our *Souls*; which are to be kept above all keeping? *David* gives us this advice. *Pſal.* 4. 4. *Commune with your hearts.* If Men would do thus; as it would prevent a great deal of Repentance, ſo it would produce more kindly Repentance. God indeed propounds this as one way to the removal of His greateſt judgements, *Hag.* 1. 7. *Now therefore, conſider your wayes.* The exacteſt Chriſtian (if he would thus retire into the Cloſet of meditation, and reflect upon his own heart and life) would find abundant matter to humble and abaſe him, to fill him with mourning and bitterneſs, and drive him to Chriſt for pardon: there are ſo many ſtraglings of a wandring and ſinfully byaſſed heart, ſo many aberrations of a miſguided life.

3. Let

3. Let all your Sins and breaches of Covenant drive you to Christ, mourning, and yet believing, for pardon and washing, He is the Surety of the Covenant, get Him engaged: He is the *Fountain set open for Sin and for uncleanness.* Go wash your filthy garment here, and they that are often defiled, should be often washing. Mourn after a Godly sort, that is an Index of true Repentance: But think not that your tears will wash off the filth: Believe therefore on Christ that He may do it. Repent and believe, Faith distinguisheth Repentance Evangelical from that which is Legal, it is mixed with Faith. Make Christ your Righteousness and Sanctification; and make Him your Intercessour. Bring your Sins every day to His Cross as those that are wearied and burdened with them; and He will plead the Covenant for you: Your follies shall not be laid to your charge, your iniquities shall be blotted out of His book of remembrance, sunk down as a Mill-stone in the depths of the Sea, buried in a Grave of everlasting oblivion, and God will confirm to you His everlasting Mercies.

2. I now come to some more particular directions for our right keeping Covenant with God. And here let me premise that it is not my purpose to descend to the most particular Rules; for we must know that Covenant-keeping is of equal extent with Gospel-obedience, and that is exceeding broad. I shall only propound some comprehensive particulars, and such as do most nearly concern us considered as a Covenanted reforming People: Such we are by profession, God grant we may be so in reality.

Here I shall first propound a few Rules to the whole body of the Church considered as one, and then single out the Children of the Covenant, and add some special Words of counsel unto them apart by themselves.

1. Let

1. Let me preſcribe ſome Scripture-Rules to the body of the Church, or Society of God's People: Would you be found and acknowledged to be a Society that keeps Covenant with God? Obſerve then theſe Directions.

1. Keep pure and intire all the Ordinances of God from corruption, either by Depravation or Innovation. The Oracles and Ordinances of God are committed to His Church as a great depoſitum, worthy of our utmoſt care and watchfulneſs: They are great things, they are the means of eternal Life; the Glory, as well as the Love of God is abundantly manifeſted in them to the Children of Men: They are the fat things of his houſe, *Pſal.* 36. 8. 63. 5. They are things by which, not only poor Man, but alſo (as ſound Divines interpret that, *Eph.* 3. 10.) Angels themſelves are inſtructed in the precious myſtery of Man's Salvation by Chriſt. And there is great reaſon why the People of God ſhould keep them up in their purity, becauſe the Viſible Covenant-tranſactions between God and His People are therein upheld and continued. They are the means, both of our keeping Covenant with God, and by which alſo He conveyes down to us the ſpiritual bleſſings thereof. Furthermore, if the Ordinances be corrupted, the ſtreams by which we receive the Waters of Life are defiled, or obſtructed, which cannot but be very dangerous to the Church of Chriſt, and will certainly expoſe many Souls to great hazards. And the more need have Men to look to it, inaſmuch as the preſent times greatly labour of this diſeaſe, and thereby there are occaſioned many and great temptations for the People of God to loſe much ground, and give way to their own damage in compliance with the luſts of Men. Now there are two wayes by which the Ordinances of Chriſt may be corrupted, and either of them is exceeding dangerous, and cannot

be admitted without our being guilty of breaking Covenant, *viz.*

1. By Depravation: I mean a contemptuous rejection, and casting off the Ordinances, either in Whole or in Part: Some there be that do wholly reject Visible-Ordinances, as things Carnal, and not suted to the spiritual dispensations of Grace in the Dayes of the Gospel; Men, who (under pretence of holiness, and an extraordinary pitch of perfection) do throw off and trample upon the very means of holiness: Men that have gained too much charity in the World, but are indeed dangerous enemies to the People of God, and subverters of Covenant-duties: Others there be that call some Ordinances in question, either throwing them wholly aside, or, at the least, turning them out of the right order and course. *Anabaptisme* is a dangerous underminer of Gospel-Order and Ordinances. And many there be that account it but a light matter to neglect this or that of Christ's Institutions. Many plead, this is not necessary, and that may be omitted without any danger: A Man may get to Heaven though he be not baptized, or though he never comes to the Lord's Table. But to what end are all these Cavellings and Argumentations used, but to throw an imputation of folly upon the infinite wisdome of Jesus Christ? Neither are we to lay out the way to Man's Salvation by the Rule of God's absolute Power, but according to his revealed Will; and God that hath annexed to His Covenant the means of the Gospel as the way of our Duty, will not excuse us from the guilt of the contempt of His Covenant, because we therefore neglected and slighted His Ordinances, because we had a confidence in His Power and Mercy, hoping that He would save us without them. If God were so exact with *Moses*, that He strictly engaged him to follow the pattern given him in the mount, in all things belong-

belonging to his houſe, not ommitting to preſcribe the number and places of every Pin in the Tabernacle, ſurely then He will charge breach of Covenant upon all ſuch as dare to mutilate or curtaile any of His Goſpel-appointments.

2. By Innovation: *i. e.* by introducing or bringing into the worſhip of God the appendices or additions of Mens own inventions, under a pretence of holineſs, reverence, helps to devotion, or whatſoever other fair ſhews Men may endeavour to cover it withall. God's command is ſtrict, that we neither add to, nor take from His Church Inſtitutions. Chriſt is the only Lord and Law-giver: And to bind the Conſcience to the Religious obſervation of any thing in worſhip, which is not appointed by Him, is plain Superſtition. The efficacy of all Church-Ordinances for the good of the Souls of God's People depends upon the bleſſing of Chriſt, which bleſſing He hath no where engaged to Will-worſhip, or that fear of God, which (therefore) is *in vain taught by the precepts of Men*, and to think that Chriſt hath not taken ſufficient care in His Goſpel, and made plentiful Proviſion there, for the ſecuring of His intereſt and Glory in His Church, the wel-fare alſo, and ſalvation of the Souls of His People, is to charge unfaithfulneſs, or, at the leaſt, raſh heedleſneſs and imprudence upon Him who is declared to be faithful in His Houſe, as *Moſes* was in his; yea, with this addition, that *Moſes* did as a *Servant*, He as a *Son*. Let us then take heed that we be not drawn away, nor turned aſide. What temptations may be ſet before us on theſe accounts, God only knowes, and when they come, there are many things which may ſeem but little, and we may be accounted nice and peeviſh for ſtanding on ſuch punctilio's, yet even the ἰωτα's and tittles of the Will of Chriſt are carefully to be maintained and defended. It was

thought by ſome, no great matter in Primitive times, to throw a little Frankincenſe upon the fire, on the Heathen Altars, without a word ſpeaking, and a liberty of privat interpretation of their intentions to them that did it; and they were judged too prodigal of their Lives, that would not for ſo trifling a thing redeem them: yet the Martyrs choſe all manner of cruel Tortures rather than yeeld to do it. I plead not for Nicetyes, nor pretended ſcrupuloſityes in things meerly occaſional and civil, which are appendices to Religion, and come not under any particular Rule; but for what concerns the Ordinances themſelves. Let us not then ſeek after ſuperficial Embelliſhments; but take delight in the *ſimplicity* and *plainneſs* of Goſpel-Diſpenſations.

2. Carefully avoid and withſtand the Sins of the Time s: As there are no times or ages of the Church free from their Temptations, ſo, as times change, Temptations alter: There are divers Sins, which (like divers Garbes) take their turnes to be in faſhion. And it is a principal tryal of a Chriſtian's faithfulneſs in the *Covenant* when he refuſeth to go with a multitude to do evil. This was *Noah's* commendation, and a ſingular advantage it brought with it, *Gen.* 7. 1. But there are ſome times wherein Sin greatly abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold; when Apoſtacy is more general among Profeſſours, when the Stars fall: theſe are perillous times, this is an hour of Temptation; and now *he that is faithful to death ſhall have a Crown of Life.* That this is ſuch an hour with moſt of the reformed *Churches* now in the World, is too manifeſt to be called in queſtion: And it is one part of our *Covenant* with God, to be watchful & careful againſt the evils of the times: there are many Sins which theſe places we live in do labour of, and God is greatly provoked by them, and His Name diſhonoured: Some of the moſt

notorious and dangerous of theſe I ſhall enter particular caution againſt, *viz.*

1. A ſpirit of *C*ontention. It is very lamentable to ſee how the People of God are exceeding apt to fall out in their way to Heaven; how much the peace of theſe and thoſe *C*hurches is ſhaken; what light matters foment, and what an eager ſpirit there is to maintain diviſions; a ſad ſymptome of ruine if God in mercy prevent it not: Heart-diviſions certainly render a People guilty before God, *Hoſ.* 10. 2. And do greatly hinder the progreſs of the truth; yea, take away the beauty and ſtrength of the *C*hurch, and bring all to confuſion, *Jam.* 3. 16. Faith and Order, Peace and Truth is the glory of any *C*hurch: And it is a great mercy for any ſociety that theirs is ſpoken of in the *C*hurches; and bleſſed be God for this *C*ongregation on that behalf, the Lord maintain and encreaſe it: Satan is alwayes watching his opportunity, and if he finds advantage will not neglect it, and muſt therefore be ſtedfaſtly reſiſted.

2. A ſpirit of giddineſs and Errour. Great is the unſetledneſs of many mens principles, and wavering of their profeſſion: *U*nſteady minds Men have, which are ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth. Men have gotten itching ears, ever hearkening after ſome new Doctrines, and new Teachers: The good old wayes of Truth, which are the only wayes leading Men to Salvation, are too much trodden for them; they are too common for ſuch ſingular ſpirits, whereas God hath bid us to ſeek for the old wayes; and it will be found only ſafe for a People to hold faſt their profeſſion which they have received down from Jeſus *C*hriſt, and certainly when Men go from this they go from the *C*ovenant.

3. A ſpirit of boundleſs Toleration. I am not now ſpeaking of the Magiſtrates power and duty, but of

that which concerns the Churches of Christ. Who can but acknowledge that times are then bad and sad, when a due and sober witness-bearing against the prevailing evils of the times and places, is stigmatized for Persecution; when men that pretend themselves to be for the Truth, yet cannot patiently bear a plain and honest discovery of errours, is not this indeed to persecute the faithful Servants of Jesus Christ? Though many disputes have been in the Christian World about that question, *viz.* How far the Civil Sword ought to be drawn against those who are the Publishers and Maintainers of Erronious and Heretical Doctrines and Practices: Yet the Church of Christ ever accounted Her self engaged to condemn and suppress them, both by Preaching and Writing against the Doctrines, and sharpening the Church censures against the Persons of such as vented, & pertinaciously persisted in them; purging out such Leaven from the lump: Nor did the Professours of the Truth ever call this Persecution, till now of late. It was the commendation of the Church of *Ephesus*, that they could not *bear with such as those who said they were Apostles, and were not*, *Rev.* 2. 2. And it is great pitty that it should now be esteemed the Glory of any Churches that they can bear with them; yea, cherish and defend them: The Covenant (I am sure) obligeth to the contrary. And this evil is the rather to be carefully resisted, because it is manifestly the present Engine which Antichrist is making use of, to undermine and bring to nothing the Protestant Churches withal.

4. A *Korah*-like spirit despising and envying, Magistracy and Ministery; and doing what in them lyes to render them low and contemptible. Men count it no great matter to *despise Dominions*, *and speak evil of Dignities*, *Jude*, 7. In particular, how are God's Ambassadors trampled upon? It is no new observation, but of

of a conſiderable ſtanding. Many there are now at reſt in Glory, who (living) were openly and plainly branded for the troublers of our *Iſrael*, and the culpable cauſe of many awfull Judgements: But they ſhall trouble us no more, and if ſtill it muſt be ſo, that all the Apoſtaſy or declenſion or corruption that growes upon us muſt be laid to their charge, and they muſt be accounted the Porters that open the door to let in calamity upon us, they muſt for the preſent bear it; but God knows if theſe things are ſo, & though they be ſilent, He will ſpeak for them: This alſo is a Sin the times greatly labour of, and a notorious breach of Covenant it is, and ought to be laboured againſt.

5. Great Senſuality. It is a moſt prevailing iniquity, and contradicts that ſobriety which the Goſpel-Covenant obligeth us unto. What abundance of drunkenneſs? It is an Epidemical and infectious diſeaſe: Exceſs in meats growing up almoſt into riot; Exceſs in ordinary entertainments, exceſs in apparrel, &c. I know it is no eaſie matter to ſet bounds, and preſcribe certain and determinate Rules in theſe things; and there ought to be a latitude of charity extended by Chriſtians one to another, but doubtleſs there is great exceſs; and that it ſhould be, and ſo abound, in ſuch times wherein God hath been many wayes bringing His People low, argues a great deal of the contempt of the hand of the Lord which hath been upon us: *Be ye ſober*, is a precept often urged and enjoyned in the Goſpel. There are other Sins alſo that have gotten footing and extend too far, which it concerns God's Covenant-People to eye, obſerve and avoid. Your Covenant with God engageth you to withſtand all ſins; and your own prudence will teach you to fortifie moſt there, where the aſſault of temptation is like to be the moſt furious. Examples, Eſpecially of our Fellow-Chriſtians and Profeſſours, are of great force, and

and the efficacy of them will not be avoided without great resistance. Put but a Vessel into the stream, and if you do not row against it, it will readily enough run down with it. The stream of the times will undoubtedly carry those Men away that will not take up a resolution to stem it. And know it, it will be your Glory to have stood it out, and weathered evil times: For you to stand true to the Covenant, when there are so many that prove false, will be recorded to your honour and commendation. When many Disciples went away from Christ, it was the credit of the Twelve that they stood by Him, and would not go. I know many will account you giddy, nice, whimfical, over-precise, to be ready to fall foul upon you with calumnies and reproaches: for it hath ever been the guise of loose Professours (and by this note you may know them) that they count it a strange thing that others cannot comply with them, and draw out their consciences to such a latitude, as (for companies sake) to run into the same excess with themselves: But know, and be assured, that if, to keep other men company, you go their pace, and slip aside into their irregularities, when God shall come to plead the controversie of His *Covenant*, you must not think it hard measure, if you be made then also to keep company with them: But if you lay out your lives by the straight Line of Scripture Truths, and not by the crooked line of such examples, God will remember you with favour in such a time, when it will be not only a safety, but a glory and a happiness so to be remembred: If you stand to your *Covenant*-oath against such Temptations, He will never fail of His *Covenant*-Promise.

3. Make conscience of discharging your Covenant-dutyes one to another. Man is made a sociable Creature, and the main end of society is designed for the bet-

bettering of the Eſtate of Mankind, by giving them opportunity to be mutually helpfull each to other. And the particular end of Chriſtian ſocietyes conſidered as ſuch, is for the better promoting of ſpiritual good: This duty is a Covenant-engagement which you ſtand under, not only by vertue of a voluntary Promiſe plighted explicitly and engaged in mutually, but by the will of Chriſt, it being a New Covenant-Command, *Joh.* 13. 34. *A New Command I give you, that you love one another.* It is a Debt which you owe each to other for Chriſt's ſake. Love is a very large and comprehenſive-duty. Chriſtians being bound up together in a ſociety ought to expreſs this Love by a ſedulous endeavour to carry on the Glory of Jeſus Chriſt, and foreward the Salvation one of another. I ſhall comprimize what I have to preſent as particular advice in this Caſe, to two Heads.

1. Encourage one another to holineſs in Life and Converſation. We are called to Holineſs, and it is the way to Happineſs, *Heb.* 12. 14. The Covenant of God is an holy Covenant, and God is honoured, and His Covenant eſtabliſhed in a way of Holineſs: It is then the duty of ſuch as fear God, frequently and ſedulouſly to quicken to it, and provoke one another to good Works.

Do this,

I. By the light and ſhine of a godly Converſation. The example of Chriſtians is very prevalent, whither it be good or bad: God ſometimes pleaſeth to make a godly converſation convictive of gainſayers, and that which ſtops the mouths of the moſt ſpiteful Enemies, and ſo brings from Men the tribute of Glory to Him, *Matt.* 5. 16. Much more then may it be expected to be quickening and exciting to the graces of Beleevers, and

and put them much foreward that truly fear God? The zeal of one Saint (if it blaze) it may heat, even a great many: and indeed there is great need to be put upon this, especially in these dayes wherein a luke-warm-Profession is much in credit, being very fashionable; but forwardness and zeal for God is almost out of date; and when there are also so many evil examples carrying much of inticement in them to draw men away from God, and turn them out of the right way, be therefore very wary that you do not add to the number of such.

2. By readiness and forwardness to relieve one another with good and wholsome Counsel and Christian-help at every lift and time of need. God is wont for the most part so to order it that in a Church there are some strong, and others that are but weak, and it is His Will that the strong should help the weak, *Ga.* 6. 1. Are any not so well instructed in the Truth? Be willing to take pains with them: Are any overpowered with grief, sorrow, &c? Comfort and strengthen them: Open your hearts one to another, have you any thing laid up in your Cabinet of experiences, and prudent observations which another stands in need of, be not nigardly, but readily and cheerfully impart it. *Peter* is winnowed, that he may be able to strengthen his Brethren. Bear one anothers burdens, Be sure that you leave none that is weak and faint behind in the way to the Kingdome, but take them along with you.

3. By mutual bearing and forbearing. Such is our state in this Life, that there are many unavoidable frailties will discover themselves in our conversation; it is impossible that Christians should have frequent converse together, but now and then they will manifestly discover a dark side, and if we be not ready to bear and cover a multitude of infirmities, we are not fit

fit to keep company with Men, nor ſhall we ever forward one anothers Graces: And more eſpecially bear much in what may perſonally concern our ſelves: *Paul* will not readily challenge his *Galatians* of doing him any injury.

4. By an holy Emulation. As there is a ſinful, ſo there is an holy ſtrife among Chriſtians, when we do not envy to others their Graces, but when by looking upon them we are the more aſhamed of our ſelves, and are thereby excited to be the more induſtirous in imitating, and conſtant in endeavouring to overtake, and if it were poſſible to out-do them. The *Life* of a Chriſtian is a Race, and every one there runs with might and main, and counts it his intereſt and honour to get firſt to the Goale, &c. *Paul* in his Epiſtles often propounds the pattern of one Church to another to the end that he might ſtirr them up to this emulation. Runners are not wont to let others go before them, if they can help it.

5. By a yeelding and complying Spirit. Be willing rather to loſe part of your own liberty; then by making uſe of it, be a means of wronging anothers Conſcience, who would, through your occaſion, by reaſon of his own weakneſs, abuſe the liberty unto Sin againſt God. *Paul*'s charity on this account was ſo high, and his ſtudy to promote the ſpiritual good of Souls ſo Zealous, that rather than obſtruct it in the leaſt, he would chuſe to debarr himſelf of the moſt common liberty of Chriſtians, 1 *Cor.* 8. *ult.*

6. By praying one for another. God is the Author of Holineſs, pray therefore that He would poure it out upon His People, and make it to abound: And in ſpecial pray for thoſe whom God calls to diſpenſe the means of Holineſs to you (this boon *Paul* beg'd of his *Epheſians*, *Eph.* 6. 19.) that they may enjoy the preſence of God's holy Spirit, and receive Grace to be

be faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God to you, and successful, by His presence with, and blessing upon their labours and endeavours, that so you, by them, may be helpt forward in the way to the everlasting Kingdom: All these Dutyes you owe one another by vertue of the Covenant of God with you.

2. Beware of suffering one another in Sin, but in all faithfulness endeavour each others recovery. None so much needs a helping hand to be lent him, as he that is fallen, and it is a main part of that Love which the People of God ow one to another, to be faithfull in reproving Sin. If we are not to turn aside from, nor to neglect to help our Neighbour's Ox, and Ass when they are fallen, much less the Soul of our Brother: Not to reprove Sin, when there is need of a reproofe, is (if we will credit the interpretation of the Spirit of God) accounted to hate him in our heart, *Lev.* 19. 17. And I the rather urge this, because this duty seems to be much laid aside: And there are indeed many temptations to neglect it; & yet such is the Condition of the People of God, that they do often stand in need of it: To omit it (then) argues a Spirit either of flattery or cowardize. It is the duty of Christians to be faithful in giving, and candid in taking of reproofes, not (with the *Galatians*) to count him our Enemy that tells us the truth: But (with *David*) to take it as a kindness to be faithfully reproved, *Psal.* 14. 5. It is the way which God hath appointed for our recovery out of Sin, and it is a great Judgment upon a People where there is no Reprover. And not only so, but, not to reprove, is many times interpreted to approve. Moreover, by this means we may prevent a great deal of Sin: Reproofes are like the North-wind which cleanseth the Air, If by reproving we should offend our Brother, it is only his corruption that we offend;

offend; when His Grace begins to ſtirr, this will blow over, and our fidelity will be gratefully acknowledged. However, if *Aſa* impriſon the Prophet, yet he ſaves his own Soul: This you have promiſed by Covenant to do: And that you may do it aright and to good effect, Obſerve theſe Rules in doing it.

1. Be ſure all your Reproofes proceed from Love, and not from bitterneſs: Labour therefore after a meek, a gentle, and a bearing frame of ſpirit; you muſt not alwayes expect to meet with Grace, but often to encounter with Corruption; and beware that you do not ſet your Corruption againſt it. A Reproverundertakes the Place of a Spiritual Phyſitian, & muſt deal with the malady according to the ſtate of the Patient, aiming at the recovery and gaining of a Soul. Hence, that direction, *Gal.* 6. 1. You muſt mix meekneſs with, & add Patience to all your rebukes, as thoſe that deſire to cover, rather than diſcover anothers frailties.

* 2. Let your lives as well as your words be a conviction of Sin in your Brother: Looſe and ſcandalous Profeſſours are very unfit for this ſervice. *Noah*'s Life as well as his Preaching condemned the Old World, he that carryes his Beam with him, is not fit to pluck away a Mote, *Mat.* 7. begin. It greatly weakens a reproof when it is applyed to a Sin we daily live in commiſſion of, and are known too much to allow in our ſelves. That which we not only ſpeak againſt, but live contrary to, will help our reproofes to carry evidence along with them; will give them credit of our ſincerity and care, with a great deal of authority.

* *Non modo Accuſator, ſed ne Objurgator quidem ferendus eſt is, qui quod in altero vitium reprehendit, in eo ipſe deprehenditur.* Cic. *in* Verrem. *Act.* 5. *Pag.* 300.

3. Be as ready if occaſion be given, to receive, as to miniſter a rebuke: There are no follies and miſtakes

miſtakes which may overtake one Chriſtian, but are alſo incident to another, and therefore it may be our turn ſometimes to need help, and when we do, it is our intereſt not to refuſe, but thankfully accept of it: And if we carry ſuch a ſpirit with us, we ſhall by this means gain the more credit, and be more likely to win upon others.

4. Be ſure, when the Glory of God, and the ſpiritual good of your Brother requires it, that you carry on your reproof to Conviction. There are ſome things that ariſe only from ſudden Paſſion, and there a tranſient rebuke may be enough; other things may be more deliberate, and Men are led into them more gradually; they may alſo be eminently reproachful to Religion, and a dangerous ſnare to the Souls of them that are ſo tempted; our connivance in ſuch caſes may not only blemiſh our profeſſion, but be a great hazard to it alſo: At ſuch times, and in ſuch a caſe; you break your Covenant if you ſuffer Sin in your Brother, without uſing all the means which Chriſt hath preſcribed, and in the order He hath preſcribed them, till the end be obtained. If private admonition followed with gentleneſs and Patience, will not gain, but they ſtill preſiſt in evil courſes, or are not humbled for ſuch faults, you muſt proceed by ſteps as farr as Chriſt hath bid you. And I believe there is no one thing wherein the Covenant is more univerſally broken, then in the neglect of this duty; and if the uſe of theſe Ordinances ſhall once come to ceaſe among the Churches, and the ſins of Church-members be not regularly ſuppreſſed, by reaſon of the unfaithfulneſs of Brethren, Religion will languiſh, and the power of Godlineſs fail. It is not the extending of the Covenant to Chriſtians (as ſome dream) but it is the neglect of Covenant-duties towards them, that is like to be the bane of our profeſſion, if any thing. *Eli* indul-

indulged his Sons, and one profeſſour indulgeth another; and it is to be feared, that if this were ſearched to the root and bottom of it, it would be found that the original of it is ſelf-indulgence, and that when men wink at ſcandals in their Brethren, it is becauſe they expect the like in way of retaliation: and if things once come to this paſs, let any ſober and prudent Man conjecture whither this be not the way to cheriſh Apoſtaſy; and what then will be the end of theſe things?

4. Take diligent care to ſecure the intereſt of Religion unto poſterity. There is not only a natural ty lying upon Parents to their Children, but there is alſo a Covenant-ty lying upon the Churches of Chriſt to take care for the propagating of the Covenant to after Ages. As God hath taken the Children of His People into the ſame Covenant with their Parents, ſo hath He likewiſe taken care, and made it a Duty, that they be owned, acknowledged, and looked after as His. And though I know there are various apprehenſions among the People of God in this matter, yet I would not be altogether ſilent in it. I do verily believe that beſides the family care which is due from Parents to their Children, there is ſomething alſo which the Churches of Chriſt do ow to them, as they are the Lambs of His Flock.

And that is,

1. That they be owned and acknowledged as ſuch, and that not only in their Infancy and Minority by applying the Ordinance of Baptiſme to them, but alſo in riper and more grown years. Some there be that acknowledge them not at all to have any viſible Covenant relation and intereſt; if not in Word, yet in effect they deny it; though poſſibly they may confeſs it to be

Parents

Parents duty to inſtruct them that they may be capable of it: But this is plainly Anabaptiſtical: Others that own them in minority, yet look upon them to grow out of that relation practically, when they grow up to years; but that ſuch as are related, ſhould ordinarily loſe this relation any other wayes then by a courſe of diſcipline, ſeems a Paradox, and hath been elaborately confuted by many, *viz.* That any Perſon ſhould caſt himſelf out. I doubt not but many contrary minded to us, have very good intentions, and are acted by a zeal of Holineſs, but that there may be a miſtake and a miſguided zeal in the People of God themſelves is not to be doubted; and whither they or we are in an errour the day ſhall diſcover, mean while, as we believe, ſo we ſpeak. Many believing *Jews* in *Paul's* Time had their doubts and Controverſyes about Circumciſion. But as for thoſe who yeeld no relation to Children at all; but do account of, and carry it to them as Strangers, under pretence of preſerving Holineſs in the Churches; let any ſerious and underſtanding man judge whether that be a way to propagate Holineſs. I cannot but think that the ſerious & ſolemn Speech of the Two Tribes and Half, to their Brethren, ſpeakes ſomthing to our Times and Churches. *Joſh.* 22. 24, 25. *If we have not rather done it* (*viz.* built the Altar) *for fear of this thing, ſaying, in time to come your Children might ſpeak unto our Children, ſaying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Iſrael? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben, and children of Gad, ye have no part in the Lord: ſo ſhall your children make our children ceaſe from fearing the Lord.* It is not in the nature of fallen Man, ſpontaneouſly to own and acknowledge God: It is worth our ſerious thoughts, whether, not to acknowledge our Children to be of the viſible People of God, be not in effect to ſay they have no part in the Lord;

Lord; and so puts an occasion in them to reject His fear? Or whether such an expression as that of the Apostle doth not carry more of encouragement in it? *Act.* 3. 25. *Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant God made with our Fathers.* It is doubtless (let men say or think what they please) some priviledge to be Children of the Covenant; there is in it great motive and perswasive to them, although we know that there is none but the Spirit of God is able to make this, or any other argument to be effectual with them for their Conversion and Salvation.

2. That they may be made Possessours of the priviledges of the Covenant according as they are capable. Doubtless the visible priviledges of the Covenant, are not only an *Honorarium* to the People of God, but they are also (and principally) means appointed and sanctified by God for the begetting and encreasing of Faith: And it is one end of God's conferring these priviledges upon any of the Children of Men, that His chosen may thereby, in His way, be brought to partake in the invisible. The work of Conversion, since the planting of Churches by Apostles and Apostolical Men, is ordinarily to be expected within, and not out of the visibe Church. It is the Church unto whom the Ordinances and Offices are given, 1 *Cor.* 12. 28. And that for all those ends which are there needful: Nor are we to presume, or thereupon to ground the visible Covenant-Interest of Children, upon a presumption that they are born Converted, or have received saving Grace in the womb; since we know that for the most part it is otherwise, and that God has reserved this work to be ordinarily performed by the means instrumentally in such as live and grow up to years of knowledge: Though we believe He doth it in a secret way for those that dy in infancy: God gives

Men Ordinances, not only becauſe they are converted (though they are alſo for the perfecting of the Saints, *Eph*, 4. 12.) but alſo that they may be converted, *Mat.* 3. 11, It is therefore our duty to take care that they may want nothing of that which God hath appointed for them for their good. We cannot give ſaving Grace to our Children (that God reſerves to be His own Work) but the means of Grace we ought to apply to them. As God hath His Works, ſo have we ours. To deny Baptiſme to Children, is to deny them to be of the viſible Kingdome of Chriſt, for this is the cognizance He hath appointed all His Subjects to wear; and a ſign, and token of our initiation into His Kingdome: To exclude them from Church-watch, is to refuſe them that help for their ſpiritual good, which Jeſus Chriſt hath allotted them, and exſpects we ſhould afford them, as a part of the body. Touching their admiſſion to the Lord's-Table, I know there are (beſides their birth-right) ſuch qualifications requiſit to be found in them, as may give ſatisfaction to a well grounded Charity that they are ſpiritually fit for it, and to thruſt, or force them upon it, though without theſe requiſit preparations, were cruel charity. But,

3. That all means be uſed whereby they may be brought to ſuch a fitneſs, and ſo encouraged, and helped in comming to this Ordinance, is alſo a Duty the Churches ow them. Touching the great care and pains which were taken upon this ſcore, by the primitive Goſpel-Churches; Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory will give us a plentifull account. God makes a great complaint, *Ezek.* 16. 20. *Thou haſt taken thy Sons and thy Daughters, which thou haſt born unto me, and theſe haſt thou ſacrificed unto them to be devoured.* Now this is done in God's account, when they are neglected, and not brought up for God. *Peter* had one particular charge

charge given him by Chriſt, to feed His Lambs. Now the care which the Church ows to the Children of it, in order to their being fit to receive, and maintain the purity of Goſpel-Priviledges, is,

1. That they be inſtructed in Knowledge. I know the firſt care, and endeavour upon this account lyes upon Families, where it is to be begun; but, becauſe Parents ow their fidelity in this point, not only to their Children, but to the Church alſo in reſpect of their Children: Hence, inquiry is to be made into their proficiency, and Parents are accordingly to be further quickned or encouraged: Yea, when they have done their beſt, there may more be needed to be done for their further proficiency. Publick Catechizing was a great buſineſs of our firſt and beſt times, and it was bleſſed with no ſmall ſucceſs; and I believe it one part of the unhappineſs of our time, that it is laid aſide; And could it be revived agen, it would certainly be an acceptable ſervice to God, and profitable to this and after Generations. This is training up Children in knowledge, according to Scripture, and the neglect of which is ſo condemned, *Hoſ.* 4. 6. And it would be a ſad loſs, if Religion ſhould be loſt in *New-England*, a Place of ſo great Light and Means, for want of attending upon this Duty.

2. That a due and careful inſpection be made into their Lives and Converſations; that what there is of good may be encouraged, and what is otherwiſe may be faithfully reproved. It is a temptation by which Satan gains much advantage, that we are affraid of incurring the cenſure and title of buſybodies in other Men's matters, and hereupon neglect the charge and duty of watching one over another: And it much diſcourageth Children on the other hand from minding that which is good, at leaſt, is a great encouragement to follow their natural and corrupt inclinations in the

purſuit of evil, when they ſee no notice is taken of them, but they are looked upon as ſtrangers, they are not regarded, but they live and do as they liſt. I am perſwaded; nay, I know there are ſome Children of the Covenant would thankfully accept of faithful admonitions, and ſerious counſels from them that fear God, and there is great hope, were this practiſed, God would bleſs it with good ſucceſs.

3. That the wayes, and orders, and Ordinances of God's Houſe may be left to them, not depraved or polluted, but pure and intire, according to the Orders of the Goſpel, and inſtructions of Jeſus Chriſt. If we ſhall through neglect ſuffer corruptions to creep in in our dayes, we may expect that they will grow a-pace upon our Poſterity. Apoſtaſy hath alwayes been obſerved to grow much faſter than Reformation. There are ſome publick Church dutyes, which (if practically neglected) when once loſt, will hardly be recovered; ſome evil practices which if once grown into a cuſtom, will ſoon plead preſcription, and not without great difficulty be ſuppreſſed: Something of this *New-England*'s experience will atteſt to, what bickerings, controverſies and diſputes have been? What oppoſitions have been broken thorough, in redeeming our Childrens intereſt? And there are many Exorbitances ſtanding at the door, ready to thruſt in. The Rule left us by Chriſt muſt be ſtood to, if we will have His Peace, and it will be no little comfort to you when you leave this World, that you leave behind, Religion ſetled upon the right *Baſis*, and unpolluted; and this will be a good argument of hope that God intends a bleſſing to ſucceeding Generations: However, it will afford great peace to your Conſciences, that though Religion ſhould dye, decay, ſuffer in the World, yet you have been true to your Covenant with God; have been faithful obſervers of it in this your Generation,

and

and have done the beſt to leave it nothing worſe than you found it; and can therefore quietly depart out of the World; yea, go hence with a ſolid hope and grouded expectation, to receive the Promiſe, and take poſſeſſion of everlaſting Mercyes.

II. Give me leave in the next place to ſpeak a few words in particular to thoſe that are the Children of the Covenant, and ſo I ſhall cloſe this diſcourſe: And let theſe carefully receive, and lay up in their hearts theſe few things. You here ſee the way for you either to keep or loſe theſe *C*ovenant-Mercyes. Be therefore perſwaded to know your Duty, and carefully to ſet your ſelves to perform it. If you would have your Father's God continue to be yours, you muſt make it your ſtudy and buſineſs to know and ſerve Him. Solemn was *David*'s advice to his Son *Solomon*, 1*Chro*. 28. 9. Beſides the general motives which were propounded at the beginning of this *Uſe*. I would leave a few ſpecial Conſiderations with you, God grant you may receive the impreſſion of them.

1. The main errand which brought your Fathers into this Wilderneſs, was not only that they might themſelves enjoy, but that they might ſettle for their Children, and leave them in full poſſeſſion of the free, pure, and uncorrupted libertyes of the Covenant of Grace. They have made this Profeſſion openly to the World: yea, let reaſon ſpeak, and ſay, what elſe was there which could have tempted them to come into a Land which was not ſown, leaving the pleaſant enjoyments of a good Land, and of which many of them had a good ſhare, running through ſo many hazards, wreſtling with ſo many hardſhips, not expecting (and it would have ſeemed vain and preſumptuous to have expected) any worldly advantage, or likelyhood of any other compenſation for ſuch expences as they were at, and difficultyes they broke through, but only this? And if

this were the Portion they thought worth ſo much that they might have it to leave them, it concerns you to mind and regard it. It was their love to your Souls that embarked them in this deſigne, and it will be horrible ingratitude in you to ſlight it. You cannot neglect God's Covenant, but you do withal caſt reflections upon, and greatly undervalue; yea, and deſpiſe that work, which will be *New-England*'s Glory, and was ſo ſignally owned and abetted by God's providence in the day of it; and will be unworthy heirs of your Father's Eſtates, if you do not proſecute their begun deſigns.

2. What hath God been doing upon the account of His Covenant in this Land? *Iſrael* in *Pſal.* 78. begin. Were obliged to tell their Children God's Acts that they might learn not to diſobey: And we have abundance to ſay of God's doings to this People, both of mercy and judgement. Whiles theſe Churches ſerved God in uprightneſs, He made all their wayes to proſper, and their very Enemies to be at peace with them. How did He Plant, and Water, and increaſe thoſe mean beginnings which at firſt were, till we began to grow conſiderable? Thus God minded His Covenant. And what hath been the language of all the adverſe and humbling providences that have ſince befallen the Land, but to give a teſtimony of God's Covenant-controverſie which He had with us? The doctrine which theſe dealings of God with us, teach, is thus much; that our only way to proſperity is to be true to God and His Covenant, but that, if we will deal falſly with God, He will take vengeance on our inventions: It ſpeakes this to the next Generation, and bids them be ſure take heed to themſelves that they keep cloſe to the Covenant of their God.

3. The eyes of all that truly fear God, and take care for the perpetuating of His Glory are upon you.

You

You are the subjects both of the hopes and fears of a great many. They that are now (under God) the props and supporters of Religion, that hold up its foundations, know that they must ere long give place, and go the way of all flesh, they cannot long be in the work themselves, but their shoulders must be pluckt from it; and their great care is that Religion may not dy with them, they would fain that God's Covenant might be perpetuated, though they must be removed, and that Christ when He comes to Judgement might here find a Church, or Churches, that truly serve Him: The security of the Ark lyes nearer their hearts than any other interest: And upon whom can their eyes be but you, for whose everlasting good is their great care? They know that except you be true and zealous for God and His Glory; God will rather reject then own you; but if you be indeed set for Him, they believe Him to be true and faithful, and that He will accept of you. If they could see the Covenant more your care it would encrease their joy: Their greatest fear is, least they should transmit their dear-bought libertyes, into the hands of a careless Posterity, that will throw them away for worldly interest and carnal compliances. Blame them not if they count that precious which cost so much, and are therefore much concerned least you by despising them should cast your selves out from them.

4. You are Children of many Prayers: there hath been and is much wrestling with God on your behalf: Do not you despise this: These Prayers are set to your account: Remember there have been solemn dayes set apart on purpose to seek God on your behalf; besides the constant Prayers and tears of your Parents, of your Friends, of all those that fear God; and how glad would they be to see these their Prayers answered in your conversion, and spiritual edification? I am

per-

perſwaded it would be the joyfulleſt day of thankſgiving that ever they kept. ſee, *Pro.* 23. 15. 2 *Epiſt. Joh. verſ.* 4. Oh! do not let ſo many Prayers be loſt, ſo many tears be ſpilt, and in vain: God hath regiſtred them, they are in His Book, and in His Bottle, and He will bring them forth as heavy and ſad witneſſes againſt you, if you have been found guilty of deſpiſing them.

5. If by forgetting to keep the Covenant of God, you provoke Him to withdraw His Mercies from you, and prophane His holy covenant, it will remain a blot and brand of ignominy upon you to all Generations; when it ſhall be ſaid of you that you were the betrayers of theſe liberties, you thruſt and put away from you God and Chriſt: When it ſhall be ſaid of this and that Generation, that they were Zealous for God, ſtudious of His intereſt, did, and ſuffered a great deal for Him; yea, counted nothing too dear for the Goſpel; then it ſhall be ſaid of you, behold the degenerate Children of godly Parents that would none of Him: And when Men ſhall ask why did God ſo ſorely puniſh thoſe Children, that anſwer ſhall be given, *Deut.* 29. 24, 25. *Becauſe they have forſaken the Covenant of the Lord God of their Fathers*, &c. And for direction here in a few Words.

1. Look upon your ſelves as thoſe that are engaged unto God by Covenant. This is a ſtrong ty lying upon the Children of the People of God, to ſerve and fear Him; they are bound to it by Covenant-engagements. Evermore remember that you are born for God and His Service, and are ſanctified and ſet a-part to Him from the Womb by the bonds and ty of the viſible Covenant: You were ſealed to this Work in your Baptiſme, and if you depart from God, break His command, keep not His Covenant, this will be a witneſs againſt you. You ſhould uſe this as a ſhield againſt all tem-

temptations which do aſſault you, to repel the force and fury of them withal: You are devoted to *God* by an Oath; and cannot hearken to, or entertain thoſe motions, but you ſhall bring upon your ſelves the dreadful guilt of Covenant-breaking. You are bound to *God* and His Work, and are not to be for Sin and Satan The thought of the Covenant ſhould be a dayly monitour to quicken and excite you to your Duty. Do not eſteem the *Covenant* a ſnare to you, as ſome do: all the hope you have of Salvation is in the way of the *Covenant*. And it is God's goodneſs to you that He hath pleaſed to take you ſo near Him, only let it be your care to walk worthy of this Vocation.

2. Beware of miſapplying your *Covenant*-intereſt to the ſtrengthening of your carnal ſecurity. It is not the Covenant that will ſecure you, except you be keepers of it. The Promiſe in our *Text*, is not to them that are in it, but to them that keep it. There is in this Temptation no little danger that the *Children* of the Faithful are expoſed to, by being deluded by Satan: There are many that have acknowledged it, and bitterly complained of it when God hath awakened them: They are ready to lean the weight of their Hope upon the *Covenant*. The *Jews* in *Jeremiah*'s time deceived themſelves with this pretence, *Jer.* 7. And in our Saviours time, *Joh.* 8. *We are* Abraham's *Children*: *Nay, we have one Father which is God.* Many carry with them a ſtrong confidence that they muſt needs do wel, they have ſtrong hopes of ſalvation, & their plea for it is, their Parents were godly, they themſelves of the viſible Church, owned and acknowledged as the Children of the Covenant, and hence they think the Goſpel-Promiſes are theirs, Chriſt is theirs by Covenant: But this will not hold: Remember there is a *Jew* that is ſo outwardly, & there are, that are ſo inwardly, there is a Circumciſion of the fleſh, and of the heart, a

Baptiſme

Baptiſme of Water and of the Holy Ghoſt. The one External, the other Internal, and that will never ſtead a Man without this. Covenant-priviledges are to be improved, not to be boldly relyed upon: The Name of *the Lord our God is a great and a fearful Name.* God is Holy, and expects all ſhould be ſo that will prove themſelves His People. Hence, that counſel, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19, *Let every one that names the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity.*

3. Beware of rejecting or renouncing the Covenant of God: Do not caſt off your ſubjection to it, by any wilfull act of yours: And this may be done two wayes.

1. By diſowning your ſelves, or withdrawing from owning your ſelves to ſtand engaged to God in Covenant. Not to own is interpretatively to reject: When we withdraw the ſhoulder, pluck back the neck, and are not willing to ſubmit to the Order and Ordinances of the Goſpel; when Men count it a liberty to live at large, and under no Church cognizance and controll, and a bondage to ſtoop to the wayes and will of Chriſt in His Word: There is a great deal of this ſpirit amongſt us: Men are loth to be ſo much as under any viſible tyes of reſtraint from Sin; and this provokes God to bring judgements upon us, and therefore tells us, that by them He will *bring us under the bond of the Covenant.* *Ezek.* 20. 37.

2. By not hearkening or yeelding obedience to the inſtitutions of Chriſt appointed for their good: When by any Sin or ſcandal they have diſhonoured the Name of Chriſt, they ſubmit not, nor are willing to obey the Rules He hath ſet down for their humbling and reforming, when they are impenitent and will not hear the Church: Many will acknowledge this to be their Duty, who do yet practically chuſe rather to ſtand off and be from under watch and diſcipline,

and

& ſo debar themſelves & poſterity, as much as in them, lyes from viſible Priviledges: This is alſo a renouncing, beware of it: Though you cannot by ſo doing diſſolve your Covenant relation, yet you may provoke God to reject and caſt you off.

4. Be much and earneſt with God in Prayer that He would afford you His Grace, whereby you may keep Covenant with Him. This is a great Duty encumbent on Children; know therefore that it is no ſmall thing to ſerve an holy and jealous God: Remember that you are by nature averſe and obſtinate, your hearts are eſtranged from God and Chriſt from the womb: The power to ſerve God & keep his Commandments is not a gift of Nature, which is all enmity: Supernatural grace is neceſſary to the doing ſo great a Work: Faith is the great Covenant-Condition, and that is not of your ſelves: without this you cannot pleaſe God, you cannot keep His Covenant: Nor can you worke it in your hearts; it muſt be wrought by a creating power, and you muſt go to God for it, it is His gift, and He will be ſought to. As long as you live in your unbelief, you do nothing but break your Promiſe, violate your Covenant, and thereby lay in wrath and condemnation for your ſelves, except you be converted, you cannot be true to God: See then the ſinfulneſs of your hearts and natures, the impotency that is in you, you are in your natural eſtate, like *Ephraim, unaccuſtomed to the yoke*, bewail it with him, and ask grace, *Jer.* 31. 18.

5. Get as near to God as you can in all thoſe viſible and outward wayes of Communion which He affords you the advantage and opportunity of. God hath appointed no Ordinance in vain. It is a matter of juſt grief to ſee ſo few of the Children of the Covenant ſeeking after full fellowſhip in all the Ordinances. I ſpeak not this to precipitate ſuch as are unworthy to make

make more haſte than good ſpeed, but to rouſe up the negligent, who either take no care that they may be worthy, or do withdraw and keep themſelves back, notwithſtanding they are hopefully prepared for theſe Ordinances. Theſe are both part of the Covenant, and helps to our keeping of Covenant. I know that a form of Godlineſs without the power, is a Cheat to them that pleaſe themſelves with it; But I know too, that if the face of a viſible Church ceaſe or be taken away from us, it will be a great and ſore Judgement: And if the Children of the Covenant withdraw themſelves from this burden, and content themſelves without ſeeking it, and ſetting their ſhoulders to it, it is in great likelyhood thus to go to decay. It is a great Sin, and a crying ſhame to ſee ſuch multitudes of Chriſtians and Profeſſours turn their backs upon the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: if they are unworthy it is their ſhame that they have no better profited under the Ordinances, and a dreadful ſigne it is of God's departure from ſuch a People. If they are in ſome meaſure fit, it ſhould grieve them that they put ſuch a contempt and undervaluing upon the love of Chriſt, and the ſeal of the New-Covenant; for it is the leaſt that can be ſaid of ſuch an act, that it is ſo practically and interpretatively. And let me add this, that if you reſt in that, that your Children may be baptized as your ſelves are, and ſeek not after means of growth and ſtrength; if now you have no ſpiritual appetite to theſe things, you diſcover a dangerous ſigne of much hypocriſie lodging in your hearts.

6. Beware you do not wilfully overthrow the foundations which your Fathers have laid. I know it is one thing to be charged for doing it, & another to do it indeed: Many have been branded for this injuriouſly, whiles they have aſſerted *thoſe things, which, though believed by our Predeceſſours, yet there was no ſuch occaſion*

ſon of practice as afterward. Beſides, it's certain, that no pattern or preſident or precept of Men is our Rule, any further then the Scripture is theirs, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. But here have been good foundations laid; and there ſeems to be a threatning, as if thoſe who are now grown and growing up ſhould meet temptation to ſubvert and overwhelm them. Beware how you lend an hand to ſuch a work; you ſhall find it a dangerous deſign. If any thing be wanting God ſhall in due time reveal it to them that wait patiently. But if you put your hands into the Wall to pluck down the Wayes of *Chriſt*, a Serpent will bite them: If you deſtroy what your Fathers have built, expect that God will deſtroy you, at leaſt make you feel the ſmart and bitterneſs of it. If *Jericho* could not be built without a Curſe, then certainly *Jeruſalem* cannot be undermined without a Curſe.

I ſhall reſume the general Exhortation, and ſo cloſe this diſcourſe. Let us then all be really and induſtriouſly careful in this buſineſs: God hath taken us near Him, and we have drawn near to Him, at leaſt in a viſible and outward profeſſion: We have owned, we have many a time renewed our *Covenant* with Him, and lately with great ſolemnity: What remains for us to do, but to ſtudy faithfulneſs to God and to our own ſouls in it? We have a *Covenant*, our work is to make ſure of the Mercies of it: They are ours upon Conditions (I ſpeak to a viſible *Church*) we may poſſeſs them, we may forfeit and loſe them; if we loſe them we loſe our Souls, and ſhall be the moſt unhappy People in the World. The utter loſs of *Covenant*-Mercies is an irreparable loſs. We may loſe them; Grace and Glory are not ſo tyed to the viſible *Covenant* but they may be ſeparated. God proves us now with His *Covenant*, He waits to ſee what we will do, how we will manage this Intereſt. It will be a great account that

that such a People will have to give in in the great Day, when every Talent shall be reckoned for: Well might the Psalmist advise, *Serve the Lord with fear, rejoyce with trembling*, *Psal.* 2. 11. And the Apostle, *Heb.* 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.* None have more need to be afraid and awfully careful than a People that are in Covenant with God. Every Sin of yours is aggravated with a peculiar Consideration; every scandal is of a deep dy, and gives great occasion for the Name of God to be evil spoken of. You stand upon a dangerous Precipice, if you fall, your fall must needs be stupendous. *Be not then high minded but fear*: Fear, lest Satan and your deceitful hearts beguile you; fear lest you should in bold presumption rest upon vain and carnall confidence; fear left an evil heart of unbelief should lead you away from the living God. You have a price in your hands, make use of it, the Kingdome of God is come unto you, do not put it away: The blessing of an everlasting Covenant, and in it everlasting blessings are set before you: Fulfil the Condition and they are yours: If you cannot (and you cannot) do it of your selves, let it drive you to Jesus Christ the Mediator, that He may do it for you: His Grace was never wanting to that Soul that truly sought it of Him: Serve Him, and He will save you: Repent not of your engagements, draw not back your hand having set it to the Plough: Be faithful in a little, and you shall be Heirs of great Glory. God requires nothing of you, but what is your reasonable service; neither doth He require more than (of His rich Grace) He is free and ready to give you Power to perform. You have to do with a God who is jealous for His great Name, that will not be put off with pretences. Christ who is the foundation of the Covenant, *Is not only a*

Corner-

Corner-ſtone, but alſo *a ſtumbling-ſtone, a Rock of offence.* They are not only the matters of this preſent life, but of eternity that you have here to do in. *If you forſake God, He will caſt you off for ever*: But if you do in uprightneſs devote your ſelves to Him, in true Faith depend upon him, with ſincere Obedience improve your Time and Talents for Him, *He is Faithfull that hath promiſed, who will alſo perform it*: There ſhall not one good Word of His fall to the ground, but whatſoever He hath ſpoken for your encouragement, ſhall be fully accompliſhed for you: *He ſhall give you the end of your faith, the ſalvation of your Souls*: *And after you have ſerv'd Him in the Regeneration, you ſhall ſit upon Thrones, and be with* Abraham, *with* Iſaack, *and with* Jacob *in the Kingdome*; where you ſhall find your little Faith, your little Patience, your little fidelity, Shall be (in Chriſt) rewarded with endleſs Glory.

FINIS.

The Printer, To the Reader.

Humanum est Errare is an old Cloak, and grown somewhat Thred-bare: Besides, it is not for every Man's Wearing, and there may be a question whether I have a clear Title to it, or no: Wherefore I forbear to put it on, and intreat the modest Reader, either to look off my naked *ERRATA*, or else charitably to Correct them: *Pag.* 5. *Line*, 25. *for* (*otherwayes*) *Read* otherwise. *p.* 16. *l.* 25. *r.* Object. *p.* 17. *l.* 23. *dele* (not) *p.* 20. *l.* 12. *r.* equally. *p.* 23. *l.* 19. *strike out* (*laboured*) & *r.* believed. *p.* 25. *l.* 9. *for* (*os*) *r.* as. *p.* 26. *l.* 3. *for* (*the*) *r.* that. *l.* 8. *for* (*be*) *r.* by. *p.* 27. *l.* 8. *for* (73.) *r.* 78. *l.* 11. *for.* (*referes*) *r.* referrs. *l.* 16. *r.* failing. *p.* 28. *l.* 15. *for* (*Job* 3. 13.) *r.* *John* 3. 18. *p.* 29. *l.* 15. *dele* (as) *p.* 40. *l.* 22. *for* (*there*) *r.* their. *p.* 51. *l.* 11. *for* (*tenor*) *r.* terror. *p.* 60. *l.* 22. *for.* (*to*) *r.* of. *p.* 67. *l.* 28. *dele* (*a*) *p.* 68. *l.* 26. *r.* in. *p.* 86 *l.* 2. *for* (*John*) *r.* *Joshuah*. *p.* 104. *l* 14. *for* (*so*) *r.* and. *p.* 107. *l.* 10. *r.* industrious. *p.* 110. *l.* 24. *r.* persist. There are other Literal Faults, and Mispointings, which it will be easier for the Intelligent Reader to discern and amend, than for me here to insert.

THE *NECESSITY* OF SINCERITY, in renewing COVENANT:

Opened and urged in a *SERMON* Preached to the Third gathered Church in *Boston New-England*, *June*, 29. 1680. On the Day wherein they Solemnly renewed *COVENANT*.

By *SAMUEL WILLARD* Teacher of that Church.

Psal. 119. 8. *Let my Heart be sound in thy Statutes, that I be not ashamed.*

Lam. 3. 41. *Let us lift up our Heart with our hands to God in the Heavens.*

BOSTON IN NEW-ENGLAND.
Printed by *James Glen*, for *Samuel Sewall*. 1682.

The Necessity of SINCERITY in Renewing COVENANT.

Psal. 78. 37. begin. *For their Heart was not right with Him.*

THe great Affair occasioning this Solemnity, and business we have to attend this day in the presence of God, is to revive, and a-new to ratifie the Covenant-engagement in which we stand obliged unto Him: To the end that we may awaken our drowzy, and quicken our slow hearts to a diligence in performing that duty, which (by a natural propensity, and too many insinuating Temptations) we are very prone to neglect. As also that we may enjoy the gracious & favorable presence of God with us, pardoning, owning and accepting of us. That it is a laudable (and often a necessary) practice (as being established by precept, and confirmed by the example of the People of God from ancient Times) is not my present Work to insist upon, it being else-where, and by the labours of another (now made publick) sufficiently cleared. The great thing is, that we may so do it as to obtain, and not miss of our end; That we may not (instead of

obtaining a bleſſing) incenſe Divine diſpleaſure, and pull down a Curſe upon our own heads. My deſigne therefore is, to enter Caution and propound counſel to that purpoſe (as *God* ſhall help) and that by an improvement of theſe Words; to make way unto which let us only in general take notice of the occaſion and intendment of them.

The *Pſalmiſt*, in this *Pſalm*, after ſolemn attention required (and indeed nothing is of more moment to be diligently pondered then this) recounts the ancient tranſactions which had paſt between *God* and His Covenant People: in which, His main buſineſs is to informe us both of the Mercy and ſeverity of *God*, to teach us to ſerve Him with fear and joy; as alſo in the frailty, and pronitude of a profeſſing People to backſlide and deal falſely with *God*; to move us to the greater care and watchfulneſs in all that we have to do with *God* in.

In this Hiſtorical Narrative, he firſt gives a general account of the ground of *God*'s controverſie and the procuring cauſe of the miſchiefs and miſeryes which befel that People, *verſ.* 9, 10, 11. From whence he proceeds to an enumeration of ſundry choiſe and ſingular acts of Providence wrought in favour of them, In *Egypt*, and in the *Wilderneſs:* Theſe are ſcattered through the whole *Pſalm:* To which he adjoynes (and by which he illuſtrates) the greatneſs of their provocation in ſining and rebelling againſt Him. And indeed, for a People under the ſpecial and eminent conduct of *God*'s favour, to revolt and degenerate, is a deep dy'd tranſgreſſion. No wonder then if we find him enterweaving the ſtory of *God*'s wrath, and the miſchiefs which waſted and brought them low; the particulars whereof are recorded in *Moſes*'s Hiſtory. And that which moſt of all deſerves remark, is, the moderation of Divine ſeverity, and *God*'s remembrance of mercy in the

midſt

midſt of Judgement, ſo far, that He ſpared that People, and brought them to a ſettlement and eſtabliſhment in the Land of *Canaan*, notwithſtanding they had ſo grievouſly incenſed His diſpleaſure againſt them. One moſt obſervable (and indeed admirable) Circumſtance whereof we may obſerve in the *Text*, with ſome *Verſes* of the *Context*, viz. Their grievous diſſimulation in their Repentance and renewals of Covenant, This you may view from *verſ.* 34. The ſumme of it is thus much; when God's Hand lay heavy upon them in ſore and vexing Calamities, they fly to their Confeſſions, Reformations, and Covenants: And indeed it is no new (but a frequent) thing for a profeſſing People, under the rod of God's anger, to do thus. Judgments (eſpecially ſuch as are diſtreſſing) do awaken the Conſcience which before was infected with a Lethargy, and this being affrighted with the Terrors of the Almighty drives (at leaſt) to uſe outward means to pacify an offended Majeſty, and come upon terms of agreement with God. But here lay the miſery of all, that in this they betrayed their horrible wickedneſs, and did but diſſemble, flatter and lie. And what could have been expected to befal them for this but more heavy wrath? Yet, in *verſ.* 38, 39. God's pitty prevailed, and when He might righteouſly have deſtroyed, He ſpared.

This 37. *verſ.* is an illuſtration or diſcovery of the deep diſſimulation of this People in the very act of their renewing Covenant with God, when they profeſſed Repentance, and promiſed reformation; and it is taken from the two proper Heads of a Demonſtrative Syllogiſme, *viz.* The cauſe of it, *Text.* And the effect by which they diſcovered it in their after carriage; *Neither were they ſtedfaſt in His Covenant.* The former is our preſent buſineſs to conſider of.

The Words diſcover the moral reaſon of all falſe,

hypocritical and treacherous dealing with God by a profeſſing and Covenanted People: The ground alſo and reaſon of all after Apoſtacy and want of ſtedfaſtneſs in ſtanding to Covenant engagements, *viz.* The want of an upright heart. They made a great deal of do in Covenants and Reformations, but all came to nothing, and iſſued at length in doing worſe than they had done before: And whence was it? Why, *their heart was not right with Him.* And it is worthy our obſervation, that the Holy Ghoſt here finds not fault with their returning to God, but only with that want of ſincerity; what they did had been well, if their hearts had been right in it, it was the want of that which ſpoiled all. Their defect is our admonition, and teacheth us this,

Doct. *If ever a People would do any thing to purpoſe in a Covenant of Reformation, they muſt above all ſee that their Hearts be right with God in it.*

It is not enough for Men to return by an outward profeſſion, to make vowes, and enter into Promiſes and engagements. There may be a great deal of formality, and a ſhew of much ſolemnity in ſuch things, but if the heart be not true in it, all is in vain.

In the Explication Conſider,

1. What we are to underſtand by the Heart.
2. When the Heart may be ſaid to be right with God.
3. The reaſon of the *Doctrine:*

Firſt,

First, *What we are to understand by the Heart?*

Answ. The Word is variously used in Scripture: Sometimes properly for that member in a living Creature, which is the Principal seat of Life, and first spring of Life actions. Sometimes Metaphorically for the in-side and most hidden part of a thing: So, *Jonah*, 2. 3. Agen, by a Metonimy of the Subject, it is used for those things that have their Seat in, and Original from the Heart: Sometimes for the understanding, *Prov.* 10. 8. Sometimes for the Will: *Jer.* 3. 15. Sometimes for the affections, *Pro.* 14. 13. In a Word, the Soul with all its faculties is often intended by the word [Heart] And so we are here to understand it, and principally of the Will, which is Regent of all the faculties, and according to the frame whereof God Judgeth of all the actions of the Children of Men.

2. *When the Heart may be said to be right with God?*

Answ. The Word in our *Text* is variously interpreted, it signifies to make fit or sutable to a thing; so some read that, *Pro.* 3. 19. *By understanding He hath fitted the Heavens*, i. e. Suted them to their end and use. It signifies also to prepare or make a thing ready for the use it is to be imployed about, so it is translated, *Psal.* 37. 23. *The steps of a good Man are ordered* (or prepared) *by the Lord*: It also signifies to be stable, firm and constant: So it used, 1 *Sam.* 7. 16. *Thy kingdome shall be established.* A Heart then that is right with God (as it relates to these Covenant-Transactions)

IS,

I. A Heart that is made fit to deal with God in such a way; and that is (in brief) an Heart that is inwardly

ly principled with ſaving Grace: A Heart that hath truly made choiſe of God in Jeſus Chriſt for the object of his Faith and Love. An Heart which (as the Needle in the Compaſs which is truely toucht) what-ever ſhakings it may have, yet never reſts till it comes to point directly to its Pole-Star: Though by the force of many temptations he may turn aſide from God, yet hath a true inclination of Soul towards him; though often hurried by Satan and his own corruption, yet hath the Root of the Matter in him. Such an heart had *David*, though ſometimes overtaken and born down with great Sins; and this God had reſpect to when He was under greateſt provocations.

2. An Heart that is duly prepared to the Work of Reformation. As there needs a ſutable Principle, ſo there is requiſite a fit preparation to ſo ſolemn a Tranſaction: The want of this is rendred as a Reaſon of *Rehoboam*'s Apoſtaſy, 2 *Chron.* 12. 14. *He did evil, becauſe he prepare not his Heart to ſeek the Lord?* The contrary to which is *Jehoſhaphat*'s commendation, *Chap.* 19. 3. *Haſt prepared thy heart to ſeek thy God.* But he could not go through with Reformation for want of this in the People. *Chap.* 20. 33. Men may make much a-do about outward preparation, but without the preparation of the Heart all will end in meer formality. Now to the due preparation of the Heart, it is requiſite;

1. That they do ſolemnly conſider, and well weigh what they do: Haſty and precipitate actions are heartleſs actions; things done raſhly without due deliberation are not like to be permanent: Chriſt therefore would have men in great Matters to ſit down and conſider, *Luk.* 14. 28, *&c.*

2. That they be inwardly and throughly perſwaded of the Neceſſity and Excellency of what they are about to do. Neceſſity (I ſay) and that not meerly a compulſive

pulsive necessity, such as Men are driven to by external Motives, as Judgments, &c. But the necessary dependance of their spiritual good, & hope in such a way. And hence, I add, the Excellency; Men must *See a beauty* in the Covenant, that it is a Glorious thing to have God engaged to us, and our Hearts engaged to Him: *David* therefore accounts the Covenant *all his salvation*, 2 Sam. 23. 5.

3. That they be strengthened with Holy Purposes and Resolutions to do as they shall Promise and Engage. God regards not bare, empty Promises, But He looks for Performance; and Men must purpose, if ever they intend to do: Every Holy action hath its rise in the Heart, devoting it self to God, and resolving to serve Him. To promise, and never intend to perform, is meer mockery; it is not what we pretend, but what we intend, That God regards. They in *Jer.* 44. begin. Promised the Prophet fair, they spake like honest and wel-meaning Men, let God but direct, and they would do: But this was the furthest thing from their thoughts, they were preocupied and forestalled with resolutions of their own, and if these should be crost, they were resolved, and they shew it, *vers.* 16. The Prophet did not speak to their mindes: If he had, What obedient Men had they been?

III. An Heart that is stable and firm to its purposes and promises. Men many times think to do something for God, but a deceitfull heart deludes them. *Jehu* thought to have made a great Reformation, and begins with a notable Zeal, but it tyred before it had gone through all its Stages: And what was the Reason, but because his Heart was not firm? It was a good frame *David* was in, when he said, *My Heart is fixed*, *Psal.* 57. 7. An irresolute, inconstant Heart is not fit to have to do with an unchangeable God: It is God's complaint against them, *Hos.* 6. 4. *Your goodness is as*

the

the Morning Cloud, and as the Early Dew it goeth away. And it is often ſpoken to *Iſrael*'s diſgrace, That *they ſoon forgot.*

Thirdly, For the Reaſons of the *Doctrine*, or why ſuch Care ſhould be uſed in this Matter of Covenanting, they are taken.

I. From God with whom we are to tranſact in the Covenant, in *Two* or *Three* reſpects.

1. God requires our Hearts in all that we have to do with Him in. The Heart was a main and eſſential part of the Sacrifice that was to be offered up under the Law; To ſignifie to us, that no Services of ours are acceptable, but ſuch as are hearty, hence that upbraiding reproof, *Hoſ.* 7. 11. Ephraim *is a ſilly Dove without an Heart.* God calls for every ones Heart, to be devoted to Him, *Pro.* 23. 26. *My Son give me thy Heart.* That is the emphaſis of many precepts, *Seek the Lord with all thy Heart, Deut.* 4. 29.——6. 5. &c. The moſt ſpecious, and moſt exactly attended Services, without this, are deſpiſed by Him. Hence that complaint, *Ezek.* 33. 31.

2. God ſearcheth and tryeth, and throughly knoweth all Hearts, and there is no putting Him off with out-ſide Services, and varniſhed hypocritical pretences Men may be deceived, but God cannot; and all theſe who think to impoſe upon Him, do but cheat their own Souls, *Gal.* 6. 7. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked.* God knowes all the ſecret thoughts and purpoſes of Mens hearts, and they cannot hide their counſels from Him, though they mint them in the darkeſt corners of their Souls, *Pſal.* 139. 12. *Heb.* 4. 12. And more eſpecially doth He look with a curious and critical eye upon thoſe that tranſact with Him in the Covenant, for He expects to be *glorified by all ſuch as draw ſo near unto Him.*

3. God will not accept of, but ſeverely puniſh all heart-

heartleſs and hypocritical Covenanters with him. It muſt needs add to Sin, and not mitigate it, to think to cover it over with a falſifying Covenant. God may (to make known his patience and compaſſion) bear with ſuch long and often, thus he did with theſe, as the Context ſhews: But yet he doth remember, and will recompenſe all the deceitful and falſe dealings of a Covenant-People. Men may ſay, and promiſe, and vow as fairly as they will, but if their hearts be not right, God will not hear them, but fall upon them in his wrath: See, *Iſa.* 58. begin. *Ezek.* 14. begin.

2. From our ſelves Covenanting with God.

FOR,

1. Our hearts are naturally hypocritical and dangerouſly deceitful; and hence, if they be not Cautelouſly looked after, will lead us into cheats, and ſelf deluſions: There is nothing, more ſubtile, ſly, ſlippery than the heart of Man; and it is very hard for us to know when it is right. See, *Jer.* 17. 9. *Who can know it?* Many Men are apt to perſwade themſelves that their heart is right when it is not: *Jehu*, when he was upon the ſpur, and his zeal on fire, would have been angry if any one had then told him, that he would at laſt prove an Idolater. Doubtleſs, theſe *Iſraelites*, when they made ſuch promiſes and proteſtations, as we find they did, were very confident of their own integrity, and yet the next hour of temptation diſcovered their falſneſs; There is therefore great need to be very wary of our hearts.

2. There is no hope that they ſhould long hold out, and keep true to their Covenants, that do not engage in them with their whole hearts. What Men are driven to do upon fear or force, hath no truth in it: Let but that fear be removed, or conſtraint taken off them

them, and you ſhall quickly ſee them returning again to their old wonts, and forgetting every Promiſe which they engaged themſelves in unto God. A notable inſtance we have for this in thoſe *Jews*, *Jer.* 34.8. &c. Their hearts were not to the Law and Covenant of God: Hence, though in a hurry and diſtreſs, they made vows, and began to put them in execution, yet the preſent danger was no ſooner over, but they taſted ſweetneſs in their old Sins, and impudently returned to them again. Yea, this is the very Reaſon rendred in our *Text*, why they ſo often revolted after ſo many returnes. A thing that moves by the force of weights, will move but till they are down: It muſt be a living thing, that holds on its motion to the end. Hypocriſy and formality will tyre by the way and give in: It is only Grace in the heart that will carry a Man through his Work.

3. God hath made it our Duty to look to our hearts, *Pro.* 4. 23. *Heb.* 3. 12. And although we can neither make nor keep them right by our own ſtrength, yet our Duty is to go to Him, and wait upon Him to do it for us, and in our place to take pains, and uſe uttermoſt diligence about it: For, if we fail, the fault will not be laid upon Him, but the ſin will be our own. And indeed, not to look to the integrity of our hearts in our Covenanting is in it ſelf truly and properly a breaking of Covenant in the very act of renewing it: And that brings in the next.

III. From the Covenant it ſelf; in which we do actually, and declaratively engage our whole Man to God's Service, which cannot be the whole except the heart be in it. The Covenant precept binds us to love God with all our heart, and all our ſoul, &c. It is a ſpiritual Covenant, not only objectively, as the object we Covenant with [God] is a Spirit; but ſubjectively too, *viz.* As we who enter into Covenant do engage

gage all ſpiritual Service and Obedience unto God. He that promiſeth to reform, and doth not begin at the heart is a vile diſſembler: And he that doth not firſt ſecure the Quarters of his Soul for the ſervice of God, all the pains he takes in and about reformation, will be but to give his luſt a ſafe retirement to hide it ſelf, and ly lurking in his heart till it hath a further & fairer opportunity to walk abroad agen in this life.

USE.

In the application of this *Doctrine*, I ſhall wave all other improvement which might have been made of it, that ſo I may have the more room and opportunity to preſs this *Uſe* of Exhortation; *viz.* That as it concernes all the People of God in what things ſoever they have to deal about with Him, ſo it eſpecially calls upon us, who are this day engaging our ſelves to God in the matter of the Covenant, to take ſpecial heed to our ſelves that in all this Procedure our hearts be right with God. I might here urge many things by way of Motive, but let theſe two or three ſuffice, *viz.*

1. Conſider whom you have now to do and tranſact withal. I know you have to do one with another, but this is not your main buſineſs, that is with God, and if it be God youare now engaging with, let it then be thought upon.

1 Whether He do not deſerve your hearts: if not He, Who? Hath He not made them? Doth He not uphold and preſerve them? Cannot He make them happy or miſerable? All that He hath done for you, all that He hath revealed in the Promiſe which He is ready to perform in your behalfe if you truly ſeek it of Him, challengeth your hearts to be devoted unto Him; yea, you do here engage your ſelves to be His, and can

you

you be ſo, and yet keep back your heart (which is the main and principal thing) from Him?

2. Whether you can rationally hope that he will accept of your Covenanting except your hearts be in it. To believe it, is to make him a lyar. Did he not of all the Sacrifices challenge the inwards (as the principal Part) for himſelf? And what doth that ſignify to us, but that the heart muſt be his in every ſervice of ours? Did he accept of the plauſible, but heartleſs ſervice of the *Jews*, *Ezek.* 33. 31? ſee *verſ. ult.* Did he accept of their faſts, *Iſa.* 58? No, and why not? Only becauſe they were hypocritical and heartleſs.

3. Whether you can impoſe upon him and cheat him with an heartleſs Covenant. Can you kiſs your hands, and mean while hide hypocriſy in your hearts, and God not know it? And can he know it, and not bear witneſs againſt it? Had you only Man to do withal, you might with many fair words, and deceitful ſhews invite him to credit and confide in your falſe and deceitful promiſes, for Man judgeth according to appearance, but he who ſearcheth the darkeſt corner of the Soul, and ſees our inſide, will not be ſo impoſed upon.

4. Whether this be not the way to be accepted, notwithſtanding all your weakneſs and infirmities. It is a ſincere Souls happineſs (as it is an hypocrites miſery) that he hath God to deal withall in the Covenant. When you have done your utmoſt, and taken moſt pains to prepare your ſelves for this buſineſs, you will ſtill unavoidably bring many and great infirmities with you, but God loves and will accept of truth in the inward part, and whatſoever frailties are with you, yet this is pleadable in the greateſt extremityes, *Iſa.* 38. 3. *I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect Heart.* *David*, had great Sins, yet God caſts him not off, becauſe his heart was perfect: *Saul* did

many

many ſpecious things, but God rejects him, his heart was not true to God. Be but ſincere, and your Covenanting ſhall not be in vain.

2. Conſider what is your preſent deſign? What is the thing which we intend in renewing our Covenant with God? Is it a meer Ceremony and ſhew, or is it a buſineſs of importance? If it be a meer Ceremony, it will come under the juſt cenſure of a vain oblation: But if it have ſome real and material purpoſe in it, carefully enquire and ſee what that is: And whether the want of a firm and fixt heart in it, will not evert and diſappoint it. The deſign, then, of this work (if any) is this, *viz.* To promote and forward a true and through reformation, or (at leaſt) to confirm and ſettle our ſelves in a ſerious and ſtable Profeſſion and practice of the fear and ſervice of God; to put a ſtrong tye and obligation upon our ſelves to keep cloſe to God and his wayes. Now, if the heart be not right in this matter, all will come to nought, and be to no purpoſe. It is not the leaſt breach of Charity to ſay, that either no reformation (or to be ſure no durable reformation) will follow a verbal and out-ſide Profeſſion. If the heart do not vow to God as well as the lips, we ſhall never ſtand to ſuch vowes. The bond of a meer verbal Covenant (let it carry never ſo fair promiſes in it) is tyed of a ſlip-knot, and a falſe heart will eaſily unty it. And what then is to be expected as the fruit of ſuch a Covenant? It is poſſible it may bear a little aw upon us for a few dayes, but it will quickly wear off, & that which here followes in my *Text*, will be the ſame which will be conſequent upon our engagements: *Neither were they ſtedfaſt in His Covenant.*

3 Conſider how hard a thing it is for you to get your hearts right in ſo ſolemn a Service. I can aſſure you that except God afford his ſpecial help and Grace, all the power of Man cannot effect it. It is a hard thing for

Man to know when his heart is right: It will ſolemnly proteſt that it is ſo, when it is indeed moſt falſe, & if he be ſo fooliſh as to believe it at its word, he ſhall be eaſily cheated. Did not *Iſrael*, when they were at mount *Sinai*, under the amazing terrors of God's dreadful preſence, think their hearts right, when they made that profeſſion to *Moſes*? *Deut.* 5. 27. *Speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, and we will hear it and do it.* But let us ſee what God ſaith: verſ. 28, 29. *They have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken. Oh! that there were ſuch an Heart in them, &c.* Did not *Jehu* think his heart was right, when he invites *Jonadab* as a Spectator, *Come and ſee my zeal for the Lord*? The underſtanding may be convinced, and the affections may be raiſed, and the Man may be forward, and yet a falſe heart in all this. And if it be thus hard to know the hearts falſeneſs, much more hard and difficult is it, when it is diſcovered to be wrong, to get it right. Before the heart can be right in the Covenant, it muſt part from that enmity which it bears againſt God; it muſt loſe its ſelf-ſoveraignty, and be brought into true ſubjection unto His Holy Will; it muſt renounce it ſelf, its own guidance, its carnal delights, and be truely and willingly devoted or conſecrato to God and His Service: It muſt make a free, full, and everlaſting choiſe of God and His Wayes, it muſt take delight to be bound and engaged to him, and account that its Covenant-engagement unto God is its greateſt liberty: It muſt take up ſtrong purpoſes and inviolable reſolutions to do whatſoever God commands. To avoid what He prohibits, with greateſt care and vigilancy, to be for Him and no other. How contrary and unpleaſing theſe things are to fleſh and blood, he cannot but in ſome meaſure underſtand, who was ever truly acquainted with His own heart.

4. Conſider what it is that you deſire may follow upon

upon this dayes work. I dare presume, that there is never an one of you but propounds to himself some good effect to ensue upon so solemn an affair as this is; and so indeed their will if it be not our own fault: But yet (on the other hand) take this also for an undoubted truth, that if your hearts do here dissemble, and deal falsly, not good, but evil is to be expected to follow. You would have God's anger turned away, which hath broken in upon us, & laid wast many of our pleasant things; you would enjoy Him as a reconciled God; you would have Him to own us signally by some tokens of His favour; whatever your desires be, the want of a right heart in the duty wil frustrate all. It is with you now to procure *Life* or *Death*, God's *Favour* or more of His *Anger*. Alas! God is not delighted in a pompous shew, and a great appearance of seeming solemnity, as we poor Men are apt to be; God's heart is no wayes engaged to us by such things; an humble, an holy and a contrite heart, is that which reacheth His heart, and will procure His Love and Favour. Let but your hearts be right with the Lord, And I dare promise you that His shall be so with you; and He shall so witness it, as not only you, but others also shall see and observe it. Eminent for this was that hearty Covenant of *Asa*'s, of which we have that memorable note, 2 *Chro.* 15. 15. *All* Judah *rejoyced at the Oath, for they had sworn with all their Heart, and sought Him with their whole desire, and He was found of them: And the Lord gave them rest round about.* If you be not great Gainers you will be great losers. If you think to deceive God, He will certainly deceive you: And whiles you are vainly gaping after and promising your selves Mercy and deliverance, you shall find Plagues and Miseries encrease: But be faithfull, and you shall prosper, God, even your own God, shall bless you.

For Direction, that your hearts may be right in this Service;

1. Dread hypocriſie in this Work. Be awfully afraid to come before God with a falſe heart. There is nothing more dangerous than carnal confidence. Prepare your ſelves to the work by thinking ſeriouſly in your own Souls, how dreadful a thing will it be for me now to come and diſſemble with the holy One of *Iſrael*? You had much better to impoſe upon all the World than ſo much as think to do ſo upon God. Say thus to thy ſelf, If I ſhould now come and plight Promiſes, make vowes, enter a Covenant, and my heart not be in it, I ſhall pull down curſes upon my own Soul. Shall I call the God of heaven & of earth to witneſs to a lye? Shall I invite His ſolemn preſence to a mockery? And ſhal I not in ſo doing draw down and haſten vengeance upon mine own head?

2. Be very jealous of your own hearts. Ever ſuſpect and be afraid leſt they ſhould be deceitful: *Bleſſed is the Man that feareth alwayes*, *Pro.* 28. 26. *Peter* truſted to his heart, and it deceived him, and ſo may it be with me. It is the wiſdome of a Chriſtian to watch his Soul diligently, looking upon it as a ſlippery thing, and very ready to ſteal away from every holy and ſolemn work, and to deceive him with vain ſhewes, and falſe pretences: he that truſts it, is not Wiſe.

3. Be ſure rightly to underſtand and clearly to know what it is that you engage in. That Chriſtian is moſt like to ſtand firm to his Covenants, that enters upon them with the moſt mature deliberation: The want of this may bring a Man into a great ſnare, and lay him open to grievous temptations, *Prov.* 20. 25. *It is a ſnare to a Man to devour that which is holy; and after vows to make inquiry.* Without knowledge there can be no practice; without conſideration there can be

be no good reſolution. A Man's heart cannot be in that promiſe which he hath not weighed in his underſtanding. He that Covenants to forſake that Sin, which he hath a full purpoſe in his heart to keep and hug as his Darling, how is he like to ſtand to it? Remember then, that you engage to be for God, and for no other: You give up your ſelves to be led by his Spirit, directed by his Word, to be at his diſpoſe and not your own; to make his Will your Rule, and his Glory your end. You promiſe that you will not run in the Current and Stream of the Times in the purſuit of vanity, nor ſeek your own things, but the things of Chriſt. In a Word, you promiſe ſincere and univerſal Obedience: Do you know or conſider this? Have you thought, and do you approve of it in your hearts? If not, your hearts are falſe.

4. Take up a firm reſolution to ſtand to and perform your promiſes It is not Words, but Performances that God hath a reſpect to. God will not be mocked with flattering promiſes. Purpoſes do nextly come from the heart, and are elicite Acts of the Will, and if theſe be wavering or unfixt, the heart is not right. A Covenant with God, is a Bond firmly obliging the Soul, and our engagements to him will never be performed without the greateſt reſolution. You ſhall meet with great and many Temptations which will aſſault and batter you. Evermore, when a People have been engaging to God in a ſolemn manner, they muſt expect ſome ſhaking Tryal: And if then you would be ſtrong and acquit your ſelves like Men, your buſineſs now is to be fixt. When Temptations come and aſſail you, you muſt ſay with *David*, *The vows of God are upon me*: And as *Pſal.* 119. 106. *I have ſworn, and I will perform.* If ever you repent of your engagement, your heart was never firm in it. If you find Satan or your own hearts laying bait before you to entiſe you, you muſt ſay as *Abraham*,

I have lift up my hand to the God of Heaven, &c. Let therefore your purpoſes be hearty purpoſes, free and not conſtrained.

5. Beware of ſinful Reſerves. Nothing more frequent, nor more dangerous than Equivocation: We make fair Covenants and plauſible, but we have our mental reſervations, which ſpoil all. If your Covenant be not full, and free, and plain, it is of no Worth. *Saul* is ſent to deſtroy *Amalek*, and ſaith, I have done it, *Only I reſerved the beſt for a Sacrifice*: He had that reſerve in his mind before. *Naaman* hath his reſerves: *In this thing pardon thy Servant.* It may be you think with your ſelves I can do all, and I will do all, but this or that one particular thing: One hath his ſinful and unlawful Calling by which he gets a Living, another his oppreſſion & deceit, another his exceſs in this or that lawfull liberty, &c. And this he intends to keep, and thinks to ſay, I never intended this: Know it, this is a dreadful heart-deceit, and God will find it out, and it will render your whole Covenant a vain oblation,

6. Truſt not in your ſelves, or your own ſtrength. In the firſt Covenant Man was to look upon and exerciſe his created Grace, though not without imploring Divine aſſiſtance and concurſe: In the New-Covenant Man is utterly to diſclaim himſelf, and deny all his own ſtrength. The conſideration of our own frailty and plain impotency to ſpiritual things were diſcouragement enough to our renewal of Covenant, If God expected, or we promiſed performance in our own ſtrength. Though every Beleever muſt acknowledge (with *Paul*) that of himſelf he can do nothing, yet is he neither to ſit ſtill and do nothing, or yet to renounce the Covenant of God, and engaging of himſelf to his ſervice: Only he muſt carefully beware that he do not turn it into a Covenant of Works by being his own undertaker; leſt whiles he pretends to renew, he deſtroyes

destroyes the Covenant of Grace. It may seem a Paradox, but is an Evangelical truth, that a Christian must acknowledge that he can do nothing, and yet resolve, and bind himself to do all.

Therefore,

7. In sense of your own utter insufficiency. Be sure to get Christ your Undertaker and Surety in the Covenant. The heart is never right till it comes to this: And this must be done, not by a presumptuous casting all upon him whiles we indulge our careless neglect, and say, Let Christ answer for it: But by a believing and humble dependance upon him as the head of the Covenant: And that not only as a political head, standing responsible for the carriages of all his Members; but also as the head of influences from whom (by Faith) we are to derive Grace and strength to do and perform that duty which shall through him be accepted by God, and reckoned to us as Covenant-keeping. And now having him thus related and engaged to us, we may with an holy confidence devote our selves to God and his Service. From him we shall derive Wisdom to instruct and guide us in all the Covenant-Duties we are concerned in: From him we shall fetch down Grace to animate, quicken, strengthen our Souls to Duty: From Him we shall have encouragement and support against all faintings of spirit, and despondencyes under our Work. *In* him we shall have all our weakness pityed and pardoned: Through him we shall trample upon Temptation, and tread down opposition. *If* Christ be with us, we shall not fail, though we may fall, for he will lift us up: And if your hearts do truely and sincerely trust in him, and wait upon him, he will not leave you wholly to swerve, or utterly to violate your holy Covenant: But, when hypocritical, and heartless Professours

ſeſſours ſtumble and fall, and (by the righteous judgement of God) receive the due reward of their diſſimulation and falſhood; you ſhall be kept, preſerved, eſtabliſhed unto the day of the appearauce of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: And in that Day when the ſecrets of Mens hearts ſhall be made manifeſt, and perfidious and formal Profeſſours ſhall be put to open ſhame, then ſhall your Truth and Sincerity be openly acknowledged before Angels and Men, and the Glorious Bleſſing of an everlaſting Covenant ſhall be your Portion for evermore.

FINIS.

Francis Spira.